

D. MEDINA  
LASANSKY

## Hidden Histories

*The Alternative Guide to  
Florence + Tuscany*

Critical  
**CTS**  
Tuscan  
Studies





D. MEDINA LASANSKY

## **Hidden Histories**

*The Alternative Guide to  
Florence + Tuscany*







UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
FIRENZE

**DIDA**  
DIPARTIMENTO DI  
ARCHITETTURA

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Pinocchio on a tricycle, toy c. 1940 (Photo: Alinari PGC-F-001094-0000)

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Mauro Staccioli, Museo Contemporanea, Volterra  
(Photo: Fototeca ENIT)

To the Point — where many books were read.

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Mille grazie,

Ithaca, New York, Summer 2017



# Introduction







### Map of Tuscany

Tuscany is a landscape whose cultural construction is complicated and multi-layered. It is this very complexity that this book seeks to untangle. By revealing hidden histories, the following narratives show how food, landscape and architecture are intertwined, as well as the extent to which Italian design and contemporary consumption patterns form a legacy that draws upon the Romantic longings of a century before.

This book is largely concerned with how Tuscany has been constructed by Anglos-and what has been missed in the process. More specifically, the Tuscan landscape has come to be accepted as the most quintessentially Italian. How did this happen? To understand this, we will have to dispense with any notion of an authentic tradition.

Both the rural landscape and city centers were physically edited and heavily rebuilt by foreigners and foreign capital — predominantly by Anglo-Americans who adopted Tuscany as their home away from home in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is still their Florence that we visit today. Their writings — guidebooks and histories — shaped new canons of what to see and new ways to see it.

Italian Fascists looked to the Tuscan farmhouse vernacular as a source for constructing a native about Italian modernism. Like the foreigners before them, Fascists edited the built environment to showcase certain monuments and to match their ideals for an Italian identity. Ironically, foreigners, reformers, Fascists, and contemporary tourists appropriated many similar aspects of Tuscan culture in order to construct what has been naively considered to be “authentic” Italian culture.

As a part of this journey I invite readers to consider the image of Tuscany in a global era. Preserving local traditions in the face of re-branding is a pressing question. By examining mass tourism, agricultural tourism, the sex trade, study abroad traditions, the Olive Garden’s never-ending pasta bowl, multi-national marketing campaigns and more, we must wonder if it is possible for regional traditions to be preserved in Italy today without appealing to the racism and nationalism that lay behind similar efforts in prior decades.

The reader is encouraged to follow his or her own itinerary through the book, or follow one that is recommended. Narratives can be read in sequence, or not.



**At the End  
of the Grand Tour**







Stefano  
Bardini  
Museum,  
Florence  
(Photo:  
Cosimo  
Lipparini)

Inserted into the entry wall of a house built in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century by the architect William Henry Miller for himself in Ithaca, New York is a Della Robbia facsimile. The plaster copy depicts a section of the 1430s Cantoria by Luca della Robbia created for the Florence Duomo and now housed in the Museo dell'Opera. The sculpture and its placement is not particularly noteworthy. It was common for 19<sup>th</sup>-century Anglo-American travellers to Italy to make or acquire copies.

Benjamin West copied Titian's *Venus* in 1763. John Singleton Copley, William Main and Samuel Morse all copied old masters. There was a 5-year waiting list to copy Raphael's *Madonna della Seggiola*. Both Hawthorne and James note that copyists were busy at work in the Uffizi. Some of these were women. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century about 10% of the people seeking to copy paintings in the Uffizi were women. By mid-century foreign women outnumbered Italian women. Hilda, one of the characters in *The Marble Faun* was a copyist. So visitors to Italy made copies, acquired copies, and when possible purchased the real thing. Even those who never travelled to Italy consumed Italian goods.

There were many companies and dealers eager to supply copies, pastiches and falsified works, as well as authentic pieces. Stefano Bardini (1836-1922) was one such dealer. A prosperous Florentine antiquarian, Bardini's showroom was filled with Renaissance sculpture, painting and applied art that he sold beginning in 1870 to elite customers. Many pieces were heavily restored. Some were copies and some were created from period parts. A wall of frames, seen in what is now the Museo Bardini, allowed customers to choose a fitting frame for their new purchase. Many Renaissance works, some of them pastiches, that made their way to the United States — to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore and the National Gallery in DC, passed through the hands of Bardini.

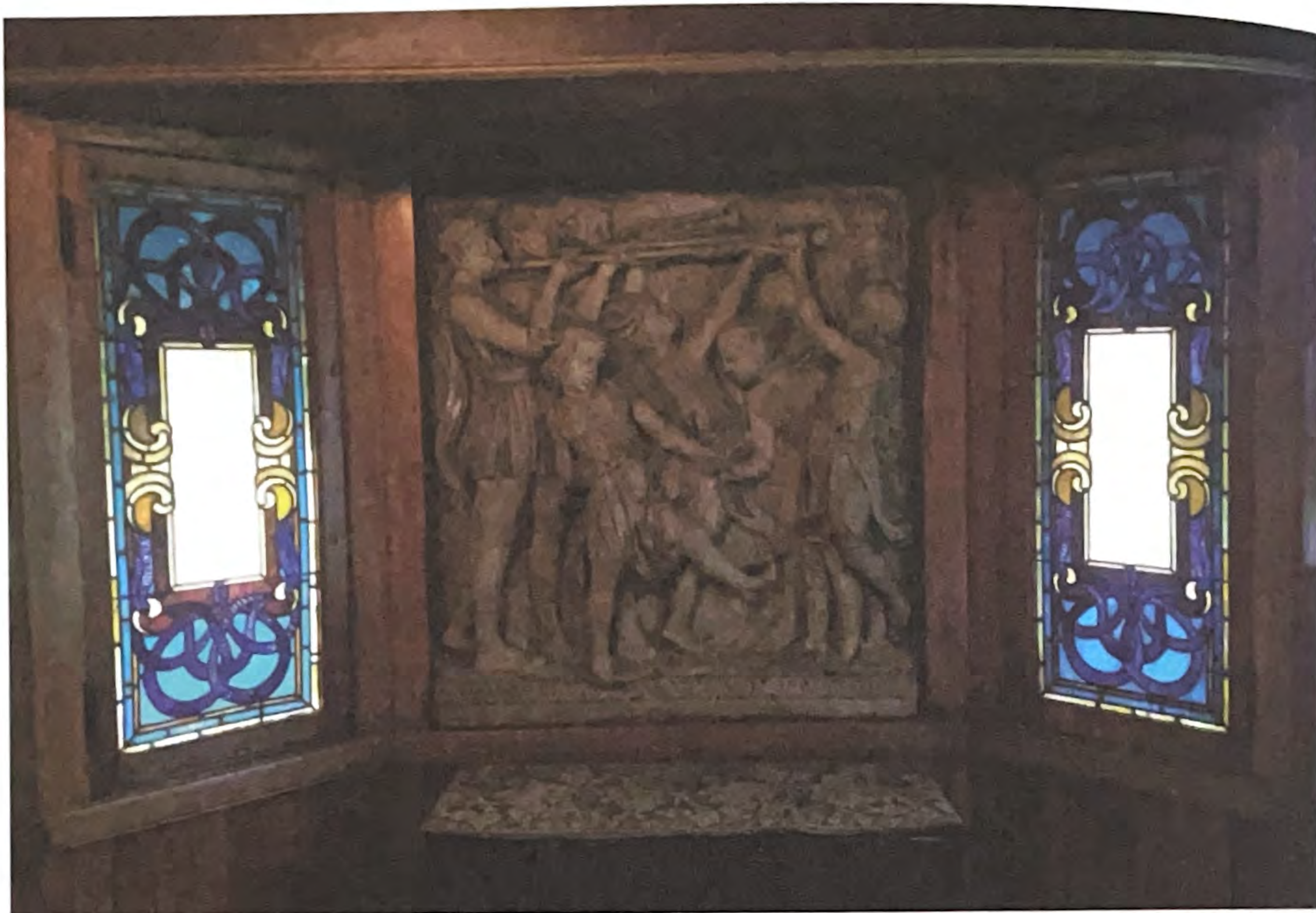
Bardini regularly supplied the American architect Stanford White with paneling, ceilings, paintings, sculpture and even entire rooms for his Renaissance style homes in the States. While Bardini was only one of about 50 dealers White visited annually, he was White's prin-

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**William Henry Miller, entrance of house, Ithaca, New York,** plaster copy of the 1430s Cantoria by Luca della Robbia (Photo: Anna Mascarella)

cipal Tuscan contact. Among other houses, White, who specialized in grand gilded-age interiors, designed and decorated the Renaissance style Payne Whitney house on Fifth Avenue in NYC in 1906 (the same year that White was shot and killed by the husband of his former lover Evelyn Nesbit).

White purchased prodigiously from Bardini, placing items in his neo-Renaissance or Beaux Arts palaces. He used a cupid figure acquired from Bardini in a fountain located inside the Payne Whitney house in NYC that is now a part of the French Embassy. In 1995 a distinguished art historian claimed that the figure was the work of the young Michelangelo — a claim that has been disputed — given Bardini's predilection for questionable commerce. Since its "rediscovery" the cupid has been featured in the Renaissance galleries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art where is identified as having been made by the young Michelangelo.

In 1897 a new tax law went into effect allowing US collectors to avoid the hefty 20% tax on imported art objects if they could demonstrate, as Isabella Stewart Gardner did in 1904, that their collections had educational value. As a consequence, the desire to collect and consume Italian art was now presented as an endeavor for the public good. Most early American collectors ensured that their vast collections of Italian art — whether authentic or not — were put on public display. Arabella Huntington and her husband es-



tablished the Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens in San Marino for the display of Italian art (now no longer on display). Isabella Stewart Gardner opened her museum in Boston in 1903. Henry Clay Frick bought a mansion and amassed a collection which he intended as a public gallery. Samuel Kress and Andrew Mellon donated their collections to the new National Gallery in D.C. Benjamin Altman left many of his paintings to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. J.P. Morgan's collection was split between the Metropolitan and what eventually became the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York.

Bardini's success inspired Elia Volpi (1858-1938) who restored and furnished the Florentine Palazzo Davanzati (a block off the via Tornabuoni) selling period and period-style pieces to clients beginning in 1910. With the onset of WWI, Volpi decided to liquidate his Florentine showroom. In 1915, and again in 1917 and 1918, Volpi auctioned off Renaissance goods at the American Art Galleries in NYC. The 3-day sale in 1917 reaped an astronomical one million dollars.

The catalogues for the Volpi auctions underscore the predilection of collectors to create comfortable domestic Renaissance-style spaces. Tables, chairs, pillows, candelabra predominate over paintings and sculpture. Consumers wanted to create entire period rooms. Most of the antiquarians White visited displayed their items for sale in domestic settings — allowing clients even to purchase contents of these fully furnished rooms. As Anne Higonnet observed, the domestic setting provided the most convincing semblance of home. And the “artificial domesticity” provided by collection museums only seemed to proliferate in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Already in 1883 James Jackson Jarves (whose collection of Italian art was loaned to Yale University in 1867 and purchased three years later), an American living in Florence, advised American self-made men to emulate Florentine merchants such as Giovanni Rucellai (1403-1481) and Lorenzo de Medici (1449-1492) in terms of art patronage. American millionaires were deeply fascinated by the Italian Renaissance and bought period goods lavishly — spending millions. As Bardini had already made clear, there was a market for objects of any kind.

Far more important than Jarves was the American art historian and dealer Bernard Berenson. Berenson, ensconced in his Renaissance Villa I Tatti, collected, wrote about, and sold Renaissance paintings. He was the *de facto* authority on Tuscan art and the principal purveyor of Italian paintings for American collectors like Isabella Stewart Gardner for whom he provided paintings for 30 years.

Dealers such as Joseph Duveen and his brother Henry made careers out of shepherding art from Italy to the US with the height of activity beginning in the 1890s and continuing





**Selling fake designer handbags in Florence and whisking away the handbags when police are spotted (Photo: Cosimo Lipparini)**

through the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They had a showroom in NYC where works could be seen. It has been suggested that as many as 75% of Italian Renaissance paintings in US collections passed through the Duveens. Duveen himself noted that as many as 99 out of 100 stone pieces were faked in a given lot. Duveen customers included J. P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Andrew Mellon, Samuel H. Kress, the Huntingtons, Benjamin Altman and Henry Clay Frick — the same individuals who founded early museums. In one case Duveen was sued for slander by a Kansas City collector who bought a copy of a da Vinci instead of the real thing.

The Duveens obtained the advice of Berenson and went so far as to enter into a profit-sharing relationship with him, blurring boundaries between dealer and scholar in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Berenson worked exclusively with the Duveens as the connoisseur/art historian — authenticating works and watching the value of artists soar as he vouched for their authenticity. Even if the Duveen account books are cryptic (often written in code), it is clear that these men profited spectacularly.

Italy was exporting its art in huge quantities. It is clear that the market was lucrative. But for many, cast copies would have to suffice. Between 1892 and 1927 Pietro Paulo Caproni and brother Emilio based in Boston supplied schools and museums in the US and abroad with plaster reproductions of well-known sculptures — including the one that William Henry Miller placed in the entrance of his house.

The Caproni catalogue from 1901 lists art ranging from a full-size copy of Luca della Robbia's Tomb of Bishop Federighi (now in the Florentine church of Santa Trinità) for \$125 to a cherub by Desiderio da Settignano for \$20. Discounts were given to schools thereby ensuring that universities and colleges such as Yale, Princeton, Cornell, Harvard, Mount Holyoke, and Vassar had extensive cast collections where they served as important teaching devices. Universities and colleges were not alone in amassing collec-



tions, as hotels, theaters and concert halls all boasted casts — including Symphony Hall in Boston and the early theaters of the Loews chain. Of course for centuries a good copy was considered more than acceptable. The sculptural group in the Loggia dei Lanzi depicting *Menelaus supporting the body of Patroclus* is one such example. It is a Roman copy of a Greek sculpture.

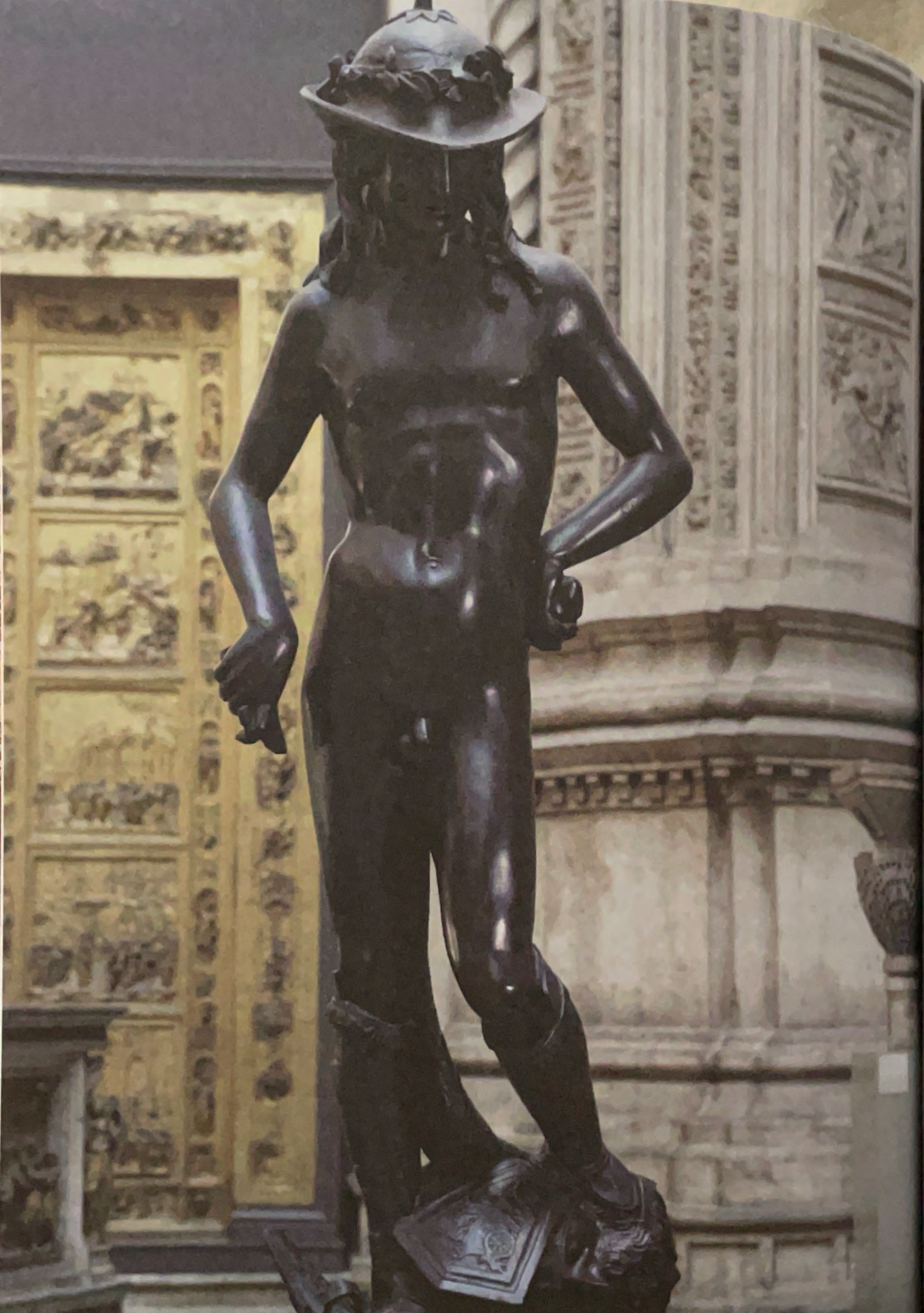
England's interest in copies of Italian art was similarly profound. Plaster casts of well-known sculptures from throughout Europe were on display in the Crystal Palace opened in 1854. By 1878 two large rooms filled with plaster casts had opened in what is now the Victoria and Albert Museum in London where a copy of Nicola Pisano's 13<sup>th</sup>-century marble pulpit from Pisa stood near Michelangelo's David. Already beginning in 1867 the Museum actively collected copies of statues, reliefs, and architecture. Some were made by London-based copyists such as Giovanni Franchi, Domenico Brucciani and J. C. Robinson or the renowned Florentine manufacturer Oronzio Lelli, but others were obtained directly from museums. Already at the Paris International Exhibition of 1867, 15 countries had agreed to exchange copies, signing an agreement drafted by Henry Cole, the first director of the V&A. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the V & A's collection was considered to be the most comprehensive and was widely emulated.

In the past few decades Florence itself has become a city of copies. In January 2016 copies of Ghiberti's doors on the North side of the Baptistery depicting scenes from the life of Christ were unveiled. The replica doors were cast by the Frilli Gallery Foundry which had made a replica of Ghiberti's famous Doors of Paradise (1425-1452) on the East side of the building in 1990 and paid (at the cost of almost a million dollars) for by the Japanese businessman Choichiro Montoyama who imports luxury Italian goods. One must ask if Vassar students are better off on campus studying the College's copy of the Doors in Taylor Hall than jostling for a quick and obstructed view in Florence.

These are not the only copies in Florence. Every original sculpture decorating the exterior of Orsanmichele has been replaced by a copy. A number of the sculptures in the Loggia dei Lanzi are copies as are the various Davids. Even the famous *porcellino* (whose snout you rub to guarantee a return visit as the English traveler Tobias Smollett noted in 1766) at the Mercato Nuovo is a copy. As of 2008 the original boar created by Pietro Tacca in the 1630s has been housed in the Bargello.

Along the streets a visitor can purchase a copy of a Gucci or Prada handbag from a Senegalese or Nigerian salesman. MADE IN ITALY copies abound. As of 2003 it became illegal to buy a copy. Guilty fashionistas can be fined up to 7,000 euros. But who's really to blame? Italy is the no. 1 producer of counterfeit goods in Europe. The no 3 worldwide.







Plaster cast  
of Donatello's  
David,  
donated by J.  
Savile Lumley,  
the British  
ambassador  
to Rome to  
what is now  
the Victoria  
and Albert  
Museum,  
London, in  
1885 (Photo:  
Victoria  
and Albert  
Museum)

He was a member of the residential [English] colony who had made Florence their home. He knew the people who never walked about with Baedekers, who had learnt to take a siesta after lunch, who took drives the pension tourists had never heard of, and saw by private influence galleries which were closed to them. Living in delicate seclusion, some in furnished flats, others in Renaissance villas on Fiesole's slope, they read, wrote, studied, and exchanged ideas [and attained an] intimate knowledge... of Florence which is denied to all who carry in their pockets the coupons of Cook. (E.M. Forster, *A Room with a View*, 1908)

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Whether they made Florence their permanent home, or were only in town for the “season” which ran from October through April, they were highly visible in the local cultural scene. They collected and studied art, founded local institutions and libraries such as the British Institute and Florence Club, restored buildings, and patronized a range of civic projects including the completion of the facades of Santa Croce and the Duomo (the latter heavily financed by Englishmen Frederick Stibbert and John Temple Leader)<sup>1</sup>. In many ways, the Anglo-Americans were the unofficial custodians of the city's past.

In 1865 the capital of the newly unified Italy was relocated from Turin (which was considered to be too far north) to Florence with only five months notice. Instantly 30,000 bureaucrats and their families flooded the city. For a city with a population of 115,000 this was overwhelming. Florence was simply not prepared for the increase in traffic, the sudden need for housing and office space and the augmentation of businesses. Just finding an adequate space for parliament to meet proved difficult — although it was finally decided to use the Salone del ‘500 in the Palazzo Vecchio. And yet water and electricity in the building proved to be insufficient. The decision to locate the nation's capital in Florence marked the beginning of a process of urban renewal in the historic center of the city that continued long after the government offices were moved to Rome in 1871. Beginning in 1864, under the direction of the Floren-

<sup>1</sup> On the completion of the Duomo in Florence see Mauro Cozzi, “Pietro Selvatico e il progetto per la facciata di Santa Maria del Fiore”, and Costanza Travaglini “La facciata di Santa Maria del Fiore: dialogo ottocentesco tra preesistente e progetto storico”, in *Il Neogotico nel XIX e XX secolo*, edited by Rossana Bossaglia (Milan, 1989); and Timothy Verdon, ed. *Alla Riscoperta di Piazza del Duomo in Firenze*. Vol. 5. *La Facciata di Santa Maria del Fiore*, Florence, 1996. on the neo-Gothic facade of Santa Croce see Monica Maffioli, “Il neogotico purista di Niccolò Matas” in Rossana Bossaglia, ed. *Il Neogotico*.





Church of Santa Croce, unfinished façade (Photo: Santacroceopera.it)  
 Santa Croce, finished façade (Photo: Wikimedia.org)

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### The 19<sup>th</sup>-century Duomo + Santa Croce Facades

Several medieval and Renaissance church facades in Tuscany remained unfinished. Conflicts about design or a lack of funds were not uncommon. The rough-hewn facades of San Lorenzo and Santa Croce in Florence were notable but not exceptional. Some facades were even painted with trompe l'oeil details including sculpture on pedestals – a popular fashion well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was the case for the Duomo in Florence, the Collegiata in San Gimignano, and the church of SS. Michele e Adriano in Arezzo. In each case the painted neo-classical façade was replaced with dressed stone as a part of citywide medievalization efforts underway in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the case of Florence and San Gimignano and the 1930s in the case of Arezzo.

The facades of both Santa Croce and the Duomo in Florence were finished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In each case, their completion was heavily financed by the Anglo community that called Florence home.

The Basilica of Santa Croce, begun in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century was finished by Nicolas Matas between 1857 and 1863. The Neo-Gothic façade, created from the white marble from Carrara, green serpentine from Prato and pinkish-red marble from quarries in Tuscany, was largely paid for by Francis Joseph Sloane. Sloane, who had amassed a fortune managing the copper mines in Montecatini Val di Cecina, bought several villas in the environs of Florence including the Villa Medici at Careggi. Sloane, a wealthy art collector in Florence, financed the project after it became clear that the necessary funds would not be raised amongst Florentines. There is no doubt that the facades of Santa Maria Novella, San Miniato, the Baptistery and Giotto's Campanile served as prototypes.





**Duomo, Florence, unfinished façade, during the debate regarding how best to crown the pediment, c. 1883**  
(Photo: Alinari ACA-F-1955A-0000)

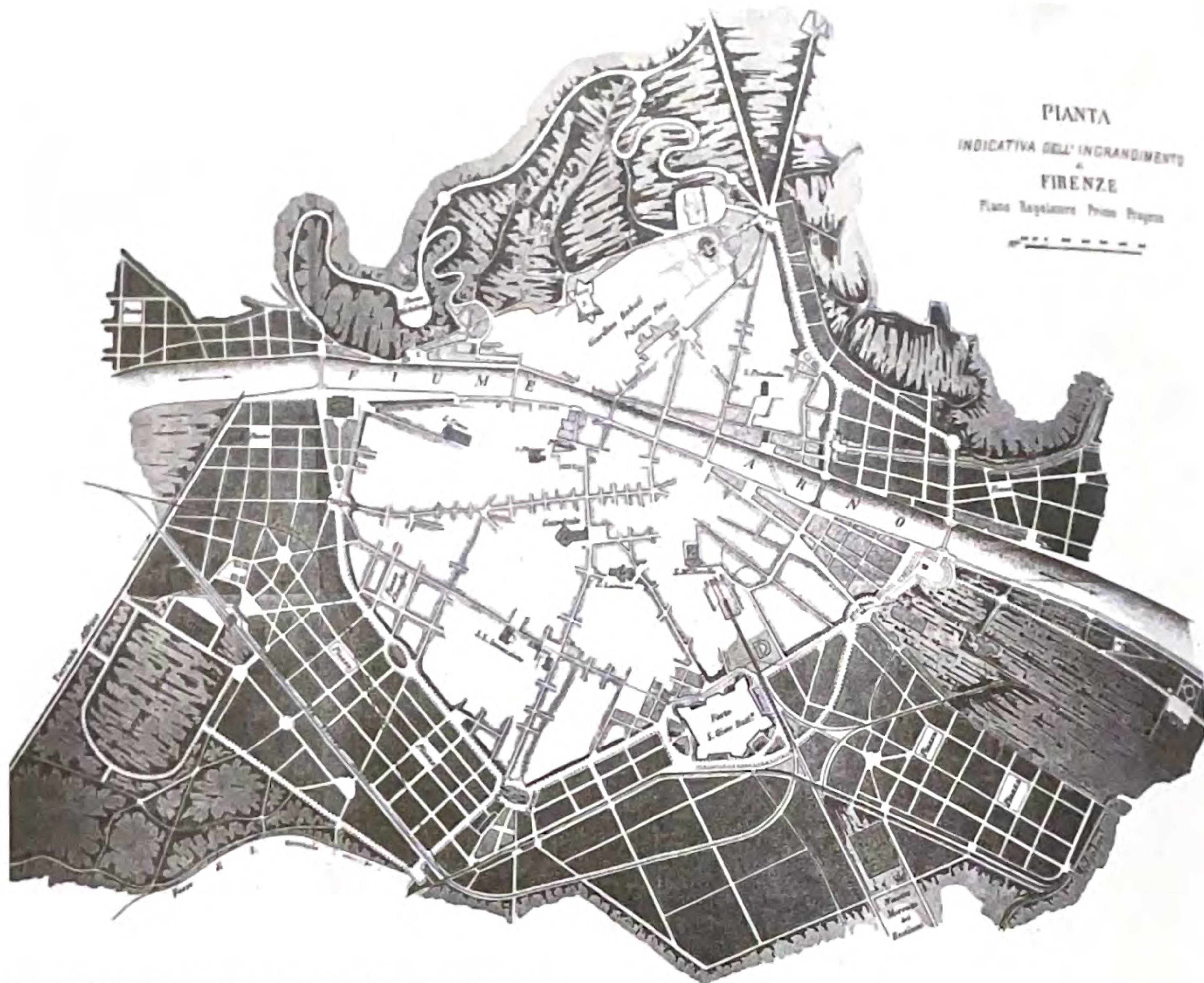
**The façade of the Duomo, Florence remains unfinished** (Photo: Alinari CDP-S-MAL514-0191)

**Duomo, Florence, demolition of buildings near the Duomo** (Photo: Alinari)

In tandem with the completion of the façade an entrance was opened in the wall separating the cloister of the church from the piazza, and as a result the Pazzi Chapel could be seen by those who strolled by.

In 1864 an international competition was held for the completion of the Duomo. The competition attracted leading 19<sup>th</sup>-century architects including Gottfried Semper and Eugène Viollet-le-Duc. The competition was won by Emilio De Fabris (1808-1883) in 1871. Work commenced in 1876 and was completed in 1887 after a public debate as to how to crown the face of the Cathedral — in the pointed more neo-Gothic form or the heavily corniced façade associated with Florentine Renaissance architecture. The new facade was inaugurated with great ceremony including a costumed parade in which donors John Temple Leader (whose portrait is disguised as Pope Callixtus) and Frederick Stibbert were involved. Stibbert even helped plan the Renaissance-style parade. Once the facade was completed buildings blocking a view for the pedestrian were demolished.





**Giuseppe Poggi, plan for enlarging the city of Florence,**  
from Giuseppe Poggi, *Sui lavori per l'ingrandimento di Firenze*, 1882

opposite  
City gate,  
Piazza Beccaria,  
Florence, c. 1900  
(Photo: Alinari  
MAA-F-001684-  
0000)

tine architect Giuseppe Poggi (1811-1901) (brother to senator Enrico Poggi who had been stationed in Turin), the city was vastly reworked<sup>2</sup>. New boulevards, piazzas, grandiose apartment and office buildings, a scenic riverside promenade, and a panoramic piazza were built, transforming Florence into a modern metropolis according to the architectural language in vogue at the time. Some of Poggi's work focused on renovating existing structures — updating facades, restructuring bell towers, repairing roofs.

The controversial nature of the project lay in the fact that much of the city's medieval and Renaissance urban fabric was destroyed in the process<sup>3</sup>. Like any large scale urban project the results were both beneficial and destructive. What began as urban renewal for a

<sup>2</sup> Poggi was experienced in both design and restoration: the restoration of the churches of Santa Trinità and SS Annunziata in 1856, the façade of the Palazzo Strozzi in 1864, the 14<sup>th</sup>-century palazzo Guadagni in the Piazza Santo Spirito, as well as buildings outside of Florence. The Villa Favard, a neo-Renaissance villa built in 1857, is one of his better known houses. On Poggi's career see Giuseppe Poggi e Firenze. *Disegni di Architetture e Città*. Florence: Alinea, 1989 and Giuseppe Poggi, *Sui Lavori per l'Ingrandimento di Firenze (1864-1877)*. (Florence: Barbera, 1882).

<sup>3</sup> For documents on this see Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome, Ministero dei Lavori Pubblici. *Trasferimento della Capitale da Torino a Firenze 1864-1870*. Inventory 30/4 edited by Carla Nardi, 1994.





newly minted capital continued after the city was no longer a capital. Many if not most of Poggi's projects were not completed during Florence's brief stint as the nation's capital, but after. For much of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Florence was a construction site — changing and expanding. By 1908 the city's population had more than doubled to 227,000.

Poggi, with the assistance of the Municipal Planning Office (which he directed until 1877), developed a multi-phase plan for urban renewal and expansion. A key element in the plan included tearing down the 13<sup>th</sup>-century city walls to accommodate a multi-lane *viale* for carriages that encircled the historic center so as to provide easy access to new neighborhoods. A series of new piazzas including the Piazza Beccaria and Libertà were designed to showcase the medieval city gates even as they facilitated the flow of traffic. Isolated within the traffic artery of the *viale*, the gates became awkward monuments to the city's past imbedded within a modern context. As Charles Richard Weld noted in 1867, the gates were “like flies in the amber of modern civilisation”<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Richard Weld, *Florence the New Capital of Italy*, (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1867), p. 49.



Contemporary scholars have long viewed Poggi's work with derision dismissing it as a historicist pastiche and inconsequential in the overall history of Florentine architectural history. The city's 19<sup>th</sup>-century features have been virtually ignored in Anglo-American scholarship, and only recently addressed within Italian writing. This is particularly noteworthy in light of the fact that Florence provides a fine example of 19<sup>th</sup>-century planning and a wonderful testament to the way in which the material language of Baron Haussmann — whom the Florentine planner referenced — was adopted outside of France<sup>5</sup>, and translated to the unique conditions of an Italian city.

Poggi's master plan for urban amplification was financed and carried out by the communal government with the support of various private investors. Attracted by the lucrative potential of new construction possibilities, land speculators and building companies flocked to Florence beginning in the mid 1860s. Companies such as the Società Anglo Italiana and the Florence Land and Public Works Company (a real estate development corporation made up principally of English shareholders)<sup>6</sup> were contracted by the communal government to tear down existing structures, erect new buildings and retro-fit others, such as the Palazzo Medici Riccardi, to house the administrative offices of the new government (Direzione dei Lavori d'Acque e Strade, the Ufficio del Catasto and the Direzione del Pubblico Censimento).

Their work was facilitated by laws that allowed for the expropriation of private and church owned properties throughout the city<sup>7</sup>. According to critics such as Weld, the local government, in collusion with private investors, caused more damage to the city's urban fabric than any previous military invasion<sup>8</sup>. Parts of the city were now un-recognizable.

The neighborhood of *Le Cascine* located along the northern bank of the Arno was transformed into a public urban park in 1864 complete with a still extant tree-lined promenade that Sophia Hawthorne described in 1870 as "the Hyde Park of Florence"<sup>9</sup>. That same year Poggi began to lay out the new Viale dei Colli, which skirted the hills to the

opposite  
View of the  
Piazzale  
Michelangelo,  
c. 1890  
(Photo: Alinari  
ACA-F-003355-  
0000)

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of the influence of Haussmann in Bari, Catania, Florence, Naples, Palermo and Rome, see Giuseppe Dato, editor, *L'urbanistica di Haussmann: un modello impossibile?*, (Rome: Officina Edizione, 1995).

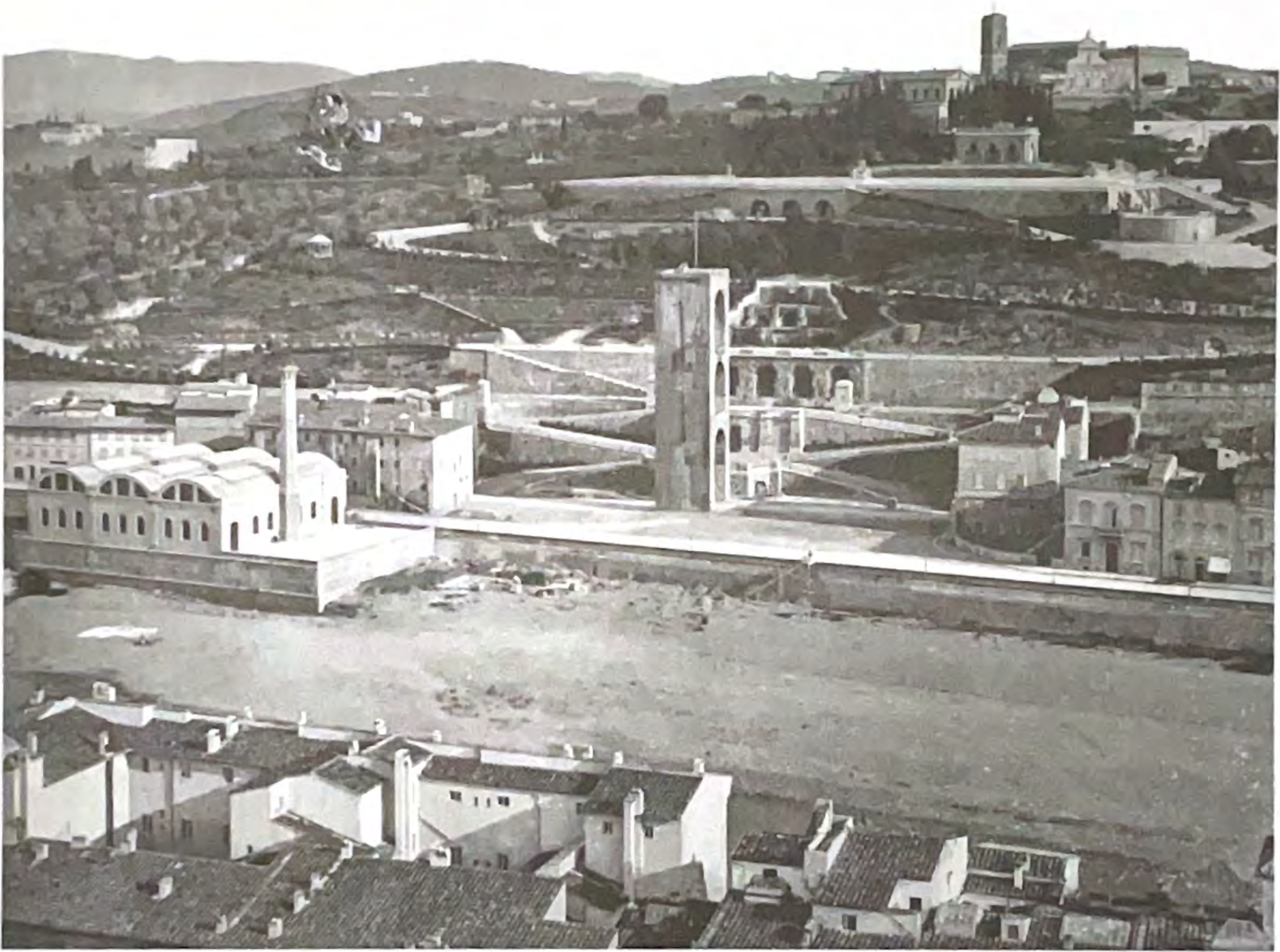
<sup>6</sup> The Società Anglo Italiana was awarded the contract for demolition of the city walls, construction of new vi-ale, and Piazza della Libertà, Beccaria and Porta al Prato in July 1966. The company was later subsumed with- in the Florence Land and Public Works Company. See Edoardo Detti, *Florence That Was*, (Florence: Vallee- chi, 1970), pp. 76-77. Other investment companies included Lazzeri and Ciampi Company, the Società Fattori, Cheli and Sandrini, and the Società Fattori, Cheli and Sandrini and Ciampi.

<sup>7</sup> On the expropriation of buildings see Piero Roselli, Osanna Fantozzi Micali, Brunella Ragoni, and Elisa Sp- lotros, *Nascita di una Capitale, Firenze, Settembre 1864 - Giugno 1865*, (Florence: Alinea, 1985).

<sup>8</sup> Weld, *Florence the New Capital of Italy*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>9</sup> Sophia Hawthorne makes this same comparison in her 1870 *Notes in England and Italy*, (New York and Lon- don: G. P. Putnam & Son), p. 371. She also notes that her guidebook refers to the church of Santa Croce as "The Westminster Abbey of Florence", p. 403.





south of the city. Here he designed a garden city neighborhood of neo-Renaissance villas nestled in the gentle rolling slopes of the Oltrarno hills. At the height of this neighborhood he designed the Piazzale Michelangelo (1869-1876). Situated on the hillside beneath the church of San Miniato, the large Piazzale was to provide a vantage point from which to view Florence under the watchful eye of Michelangelo's David — an 1873 bronze copy erected in the center of the piazza flanked by copies of the reclining figures from the Medici Chapel and inaugurated in September of 1874 with illuminations that led up to the Piazzale. (The original David had been relocated from in front of the Palazzo Vecchio to the Galleria dell'Accademia on the via Ricasoli in 1873).

Inscriptions on the David's pedestal underscore the Michelangelo craze that had spread throughout Florence in the 1860s and 1870s propelled by the 3<sup>rd</sup> centenary of the sculptor's death in 1864 and 4<sup>th</sup> centenary of his birth in 1875. Cesare Guasti, the Superintendent of Tuscan archives who is quoted on the pedestal, published the first critical edition of Michelangelo's poetry in 1863 and served on the committee for the centenary celebrations.

During the period of Italian Unification a number of historical figures were used to establish









**Stefano Ussi, *The Expulsion of the Duke of Athens from Florence*, 1861**, collection of the Gallery of Modern Art at the Pitti Palace, Florence (Photo: Alinari CAL-F-012011-0000)

*opposite*

**The copy of Michelangelo's *David in the Piazzale Michelangelo*** (Photo: Cosimo Lipparini)

a shared Italian cultural genealogy. Many of these were Florentine. Centenaries were held for Galileo (1864), Dante (1865), Machiavelli (1869) and Michelangelo (1875) among others. These men constituted a set of cultural heroes around whom a national history could be established — not unlike what was going on elsewhere in Europe at the time.

This was also the period of large scale painting that reintroduced historical themes and figures to the public. Some, like Stefano Ussi's *La caccia del Duca d'Atene* (1854-60) were inspired by local history, in this case drawn from Macchiavelli. Many of the paintings like Andrea Pierini's *Incontro di Dante con Beatrice nel Purgatorio*, Carlo Markò's *Motivo di San Marziale presso Colle Val d'Elsa* (1863) or Antonio Fontanesi's *Tramonto sull'Arno* (1867) were on display in the collection of Modern art in the Galleria della Accademia. A number were featured in various exhibitions organized by the Società Promotrice di Firenze, the 1861 Esposizione Italiana or the journal *Gazzettino delle arti del disegno* founded by Diego





**Johann Joseph Zoffany, the Tribune of the Uffizi, 1772-1777, oil on canvas**  
 (Photo: Royal Collection Trust / © HM Queen Elizabeth II 2017)

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## Museums

With Italian unification the Galleria degli Uffizi (Gallery of the Offices) became a museum of national acclaim. The building was completed in 1581 by Alfonso Parigi and Bernardo Buontalenti on plans begun by Giorgio Vasari. Commissioned by Grand Duke Cosimo I de' Medici, the building was designed to contain a series of administrative offices as well as the Archivio di Stato. Completed by the Grand Duke's son the Grand Duke Francesco I, the famous tribuna was added to the building in order to display masterpieces from the Medici family collections. Over the years more spaces within the building were appropriated to display art.

Until 1769 the building and its contents could only be visited upon request. As such, the Uffizi was not a truly public museum. And yet already in 1737 it was stipulated that the



collection could never leave the city of Florence. So, despite its private status the collection on exhibit was understood to belong to the Florentine people. By the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the building was open to the public.

When Florence became the capital of a newly unified Italy in 1865 the Uffizi took on new prominence. In an attempt to make room for more paintings, sculpture and other objects such as ceramics and coins were moved to the newly created Museo Nazionale del Bargello (created in 1865). Other works were housed in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale (1870), and the Palatine Museum in the Pitti Palace (1872).

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the Corridoio Vasariano, a 16<sup>th</sup>-century elevated urban pathway connecting the Uffizi with the Pitti Palace, was opened to accommodate even more paintings — specifically self-portraits. The corridor contains over 1700 self-portraits — 400 of which are exhibited and only a handful of which are by women. Ten of the portraits displayed were created after 1900 by De Chirico, Balla, Marino Marini, Vedova, Pistoletto and others.

In 1870 when the capital of Italy was transferred to Rome so too was the country's cultural hub. To counter this, the Florence elite used the Uffizi and its contents to reaffirm the instrumental role played by the region in the country's artistic history. While Florence might no longer have been Italy's political capital it strove to remain the country's artistic capital. The museum emphasized a national artistic genius that seemed to be dominated by Tuscans like da Vinci and Michelangelo.

Shortly after unification, paintings, sculpture, and furniture within religious institutions was seized by the government in the so-called Suppression of the Convents. Items were warehoused and even resold to the highest bidder — explaining how the church of Santa Trinità on the via Tornabuoni ended up with Luca Della Robbia's tomb of Bishop Federighi originally created for the Florentine church of San Pancrazio. Other items were acquired by museums including the ever-expanding Uffizi resulting in a network of museums that still exists. Artwork was used to narrate nationhood on a local and regional level.

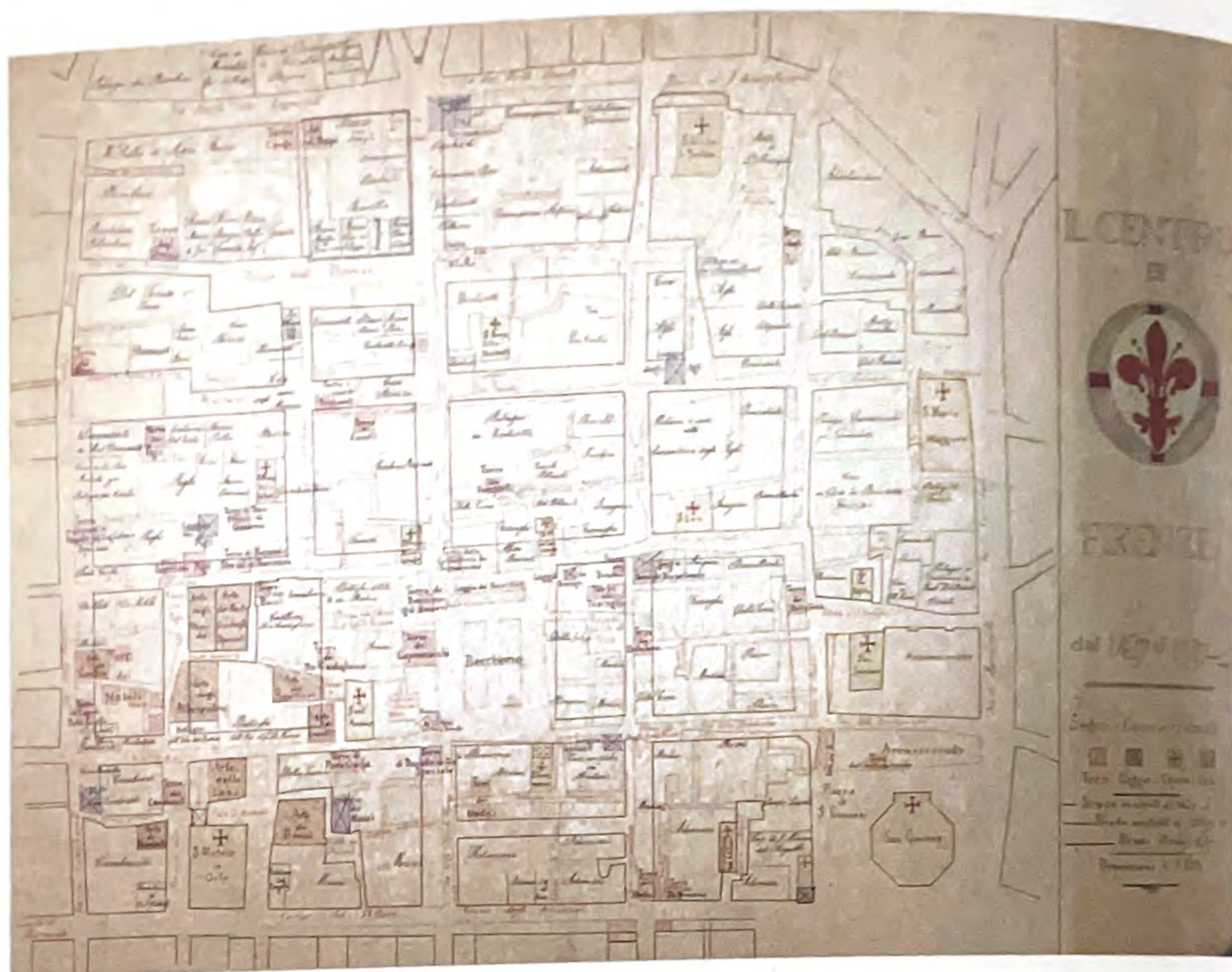
By 1907 the system of *soprintendenze* had been established to manage and protect heritage. Conservation and restoration efforts were channeled through regional units such as Tuscany (based in Florence), thereby reaffirming that any given region maintained a kind of artistic unity.

Such character was reaffirmed by the tourism industry — magazines, institutions and organized tours facilitated access whether virtual or physical. Italians became familiar with the country's regions and their individual artistic identities — Tuscany foremost among them.

Today the Uffizi is one of the most visited museums in Italy.



Guido Carocci, attributed, map of the city center, Florence, 1917 (Photo: Archivio Storico Comunale di Firenze)



**opposite**  
**View of the**  
**Piazza del**  
**Re Vittorio**  
**Emanuele**  
**II under**  
**construction,**  
**Florence, known**  
**today as the**  
**Piazza della**  
**Repubblica.**  
The photograph was taken during the inauguration of the monument to Vittorio Emanuele II on September 20, 1890 (Photo: Alinari ARC-F-00103-0000)

Martelli, Adriano Cecioni and Telemaco Signorini in 1867. All of this underscored how history and Florence became intertwined.

From the Piazzale Michelangelo one could take in the emerging modern city nestled against the scenic skyline of the Duomo, Giotto's bell tower, and the Palazzo della Signoria. As Poggi himself noted, the piazza "presented a unique and stunning visual"<sup>10</sup>. Perhaps more importantly, the new Piazzale gave permanent form to what had for generations been a favorite scenic viewing spot. Visitors ranging from Thomas Cole to Charles Dickens had come to the hillside of San Miniato to sketch, paint, and meditate upon the city's panorama. As Dickens noted in his 1846 *Pictures From Italy*, it was from the summit of the hill that one could view the city's "domes, and towers, and palaces, rising from the rich country in a glittering heap, and shining in the sun like gold!"<sup>11</sup>. Thanks to Poggi, by the mid-1870s a formal viewing place had been established for the visitor. From the Piazzale, one could admire the historic medieval/Renaissance skyline emerging from the modern urban matrix of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century city. Poggi even planned a Michelangelo Muse-

<sup>10</sup> Giuseppe Poggi, *Ricordi della vita e documenti d'arte*, (Florence: R. Bemporad, 1909), n.p.

<sup>11</sup> Charles Dickens, *Pictures from Italy and American Notes for General Circulation*, London: Chapman and Hall, 1866, p. 177. The Italian notes were written in 1846. On other visitors see Paul R. Baker, *The Fortunate Pilgrims. Americans in Italy 1800-1860*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).





um to be housed in a building of his design in the Piazzale. A caffè-restaurant was opened in the building in 1871 instead.

Beginning in the early 1890s the very heart of the city center was transformed<sup>12</sup>. The dense network of narrow and twisting dead-end streets and hidden piazzas in the area of the *Mercato Vecchio*, or old market (located between the Duomo and the Palazzo della Signoria) was eliminated in order to create a grid of wide straight streets. Structures dating to the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries were razed and replaced by uniform new housing blocks designed in neo-Renaissance style by leading Florentine architects such as Vincenzo Micheli and Enrico Lusini. The facades of buildings along the vias Strozzi, Speciali, and Calzaioli (leading from the Baptistry to the Ponte Vecchio), were moved back in order to widen the streets along the lines of the original Ancient Roman *cardo* and *decumanus*. A new piazza, inaugurated in 1890, named in honor of King Vittorio Emanuele II and re-named the piazza della Repubblica after WWII, emerged (after 40 different proposals) as the center of this area. The rela-

<sup>12</sup> For a basic overview of the transformations undertaken in the city during these years see G. Poggi, *Sui Lavori per l'ingradimento di Firenze*, (Florence, 1882); Gabriella Orefice, *Rilievi e Memorie dell'antico centro di Firenze 1885-1895. Catalogo Ragionato dei Disegni e dei rilievi*, (Florence, 1986); S. Camerani, *Cronache di Firenze Capitale*, (Firenze, 1971); F. Borsi, *La Capitale a Firenze e l'Opera di G. Poggi*, (Florence 1970); and Silvano Fei, *Firenze 1881-1898, la grande operazione urbanistica*, (Rome: Officina Edizioni, 1977).



**The Old Market,  
Florence, c. 1880-  
1885, destroyed  
to make room for  
the Piazza Vittorio  
Emanuele II**  
(Photo: Alinari  
CDP-S-  
MAL515-0167)



**opposite  
Telemaco  
Signorini, ghetto  
area in Florence,  
oil on canvas,  
96 x 66 cm,  
1882, collection  
of the Galleria  
Nazionale d'Arte  
Moderna, Rome**  
(Photo: Alinari  
DEA-S-001032-  
8523)

tionship to the plan of the ancient city had never been so pronounced. Flanked by a series of neo-Renaissance palazzi and a covered arcade, the piazza marked the heart of the greatly altered city center<sup>13</sup>. The new urban configuration had less to do with an archaeological understanding of the ancient Roman street grid than it did with an interest in creating an orthogonal plan.

In the process of these urban interventions, more than 350 families were evicted from the neighborhood popularly known as the ghetto — an area that was frequently described in the contemporary popular press as uninhabitable even though people did live there. The ghetto, once home to the city's Jews, had by the 19<sup>th</sup> century become home to the city's poor. It was dark, damp, and humid. Piles of stagnant garbage frequently remained uncollected. Wells were contaminated. In some cases, as many as 30 people were living in a single apartment and most were living in buildings that had been condemned by the city. By 1888 the city acquired the properties contained within the ghetto with the intention

<sup>13</sup> Between 1866 and 1888 over 40 proposals for a new piazza were put forth by different architects from the Collegio di Architetti e Ingegneri di Firenze. Those who submitted projects included Giulio Dary, Attilio Cerutti, Carlo Bennert, Odoardo Rimediotti, Vincenzo Micheli and Giacomo Roster. For a discussion of the various projects see Carlo Cresti, *Firenze, capitale mancata. Architettura e città dal piano Poggi a oggi*, (Milan: Electa, 1995).









A contemporary blog featuring film locations of the television show *Hannibal* Lechter. Piazza del Re Vittorio Emanuele II, Florence, c. 1900, with the triumphal arch designed by Vincenzo Micheli (Photo: <http://www.fangirlquest.com/travel/hannibal-locations-in-florence-italy>)

of rebuilding to ensure sanitation in the city center. Their real objective was more insidious. While the neighborhood was indeed a densely packed, eclectic cluster of structures that were antithetical to Poggi's clean urban aesthetic, it was also home to a large disenfranchised population — the city's destitute, prostitutes, criminals, and foreign born residents. Of 364 families surveyed, only 40 were Florentine. Of the 1778 families living in the ghetto, only 140 heads of families had a profession. Sixty were under surveillance by the police for various crimes. Numerous had served jail time<sup>14</sup>. It is important to note that many in Florence lived in poverty at this time. Some statistics record that more than a third of the city was destitute. Begging was rampant. And in the 1890s there were bread riots. Much of Florence was starving.

The unsavory character of central Florence was problematic in both aesthetic and cultural terms — particularly for the construction of a new city that was dependent upon uniform building facades, wide straight streets, open public spaces, and a bourgeois cosmopolitan clientele. The new modern metropolis could not sustain the presence of the

<sup>14</sup> Osanna Fantozzi Micali, *La Segregazione Urbana. Ghetti e Quartieri Ebraici in Toscana*, (Florence: Alcea Editrice, 1995), p. 72.



ghetto, particularly in a position of privileged adjacency to the hotels such as the New York (where Mark Twain stayed), tea rooms such as Doney's, and shopping streets such as the via Tornabuoni. Not unlike Haussmann's expulsion of the working class from Paris, the poorest residents of Florence, a population that had little authority to protest its displacement, were relocated to the neighborhoods of Santa Croce, San Frediano and elsewhere<sup>15</sup>. Their houses were destroyed and replaced by a series of large neo-Renaissance style structures designed to house businesses, offices, and upscale residences.

By 1895 any trace of the ghetto had been eliminated. A triumphal arch was erected at the entrance to the new piazza. Boldly framing the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Palazzo Strozzi to the west and an equestrian statue of King Vittorio Emanuele II (erected in 1890 by sculptor Emilio Zocchi and relocated to le Cascine in 1932) to the east, it served as a transitional node, simultaneously codifying views of the past and the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century present. Its inscription composed by Florentine poet Isidoro del Lungo, proclaimed that new life had been brought to the squalid old city "L'antico Centro della città da Secolare Squallore a Vita Nuova Restituito". More specifically, the arch symbolized the triumphal reclamation of the historic city for contemporary consumption. While witnessing the destruction of the *mercato vecchio*, the well-known Macchiaioli painter Telemaco Signorini was asked if he was crying because the buildings were being torn down. No, he answered, he was crying for the buildings that would be built — the modern neo-Renaissance structures that Poggi would build<sup>16</sup>.

Change within urban fabric is a natural part of the process of redefinition. Each generation leaves its mark on the city — the value of which is debated by subsequent generations. Poggi's interventions should be seen within the context of a long series of initiatives that date back to the Middle Ages, if not before. The selective destruction and preservation of the past has been central to the changing cultural-political topography of Florence over the past five hundred years<sup>17</sup>. In this regard Poggi's project is no different. What is distinct is the way in which the 19<sup>th</sup>-century urban renewal efforts reflected contemporary historical interests.

Poggi's heavily edited version of the past was in dialogue with that constructed contemporaneously by the Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt. In his influential study *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (published in German in 1860 and translated into Italian in 1876),

<sup>15</sup> Carlo Cresti "Dalla costruzione della Sinagoga, all distruzione del Ghetto" in *Firenze, Capitale Mancata. Architettura e Città dal Piano Poggi a Oggi*, (Milan: Electa 1995).

<sup>16</sup> Luciano Artusi and Vincenzo Giannetti, *A Vita Nuova. Ricordi e Vicende della Grande Operazione Urbanistica Distrusse il Centro Storico di Firenze*, (Florence: Edizioni Lito Terrazzi, 1977, p. 174).

<sup>17</sup> For an interesting article on an earlier and similar project of destruction see Graham Smith, "Gaetano Baccani's 'Systematization' of the Piazza del Duomo in Florence", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 59, no. 4, December 2000, pp. 454-477. Smith argues that a large portion of the medieval canonry and other buildings were destroyed in order to reveal the Duomo and campanile.



Burckhardt claimed that the Renaissance was defined by new attitudes towards patronage that resulted in great heights of artistic and architectural production. The Renaissance he argued, was a Golden Age of culture, art, and politics<sup>18</sup>. Thanks to the widespread influence of the book, Florence quickly came to be identified in popular consciousness as the artistic capital of the period and the site of the rebirth of Western civilization. It is not insignificant that contemporary to the revisionist work of Burckhardt, Poggi was also busily “rewriting” the city’s history by transforming the crowded and insalubrious urban fabric into a modern city. The major difference was that Poggi’s urban scenography denied the division between the medieval and the Renaissance — a division that was fundamental to Burckhardt’s conception. As such, Florence reclaimed its privileged position amongst the great cities of Western Europe — simultaneously emerging as a modern metropolis and important historical center. Poggi’s urban renewal project ensured that the city’s image matched the popular understanding of the city’s historical greatness. In other words, the Renaissance had been recovered for 19<sup>th</sup>-century consumers in both historical and urbanistic terms.

Florentines enjoyed the amenities of a modern city. Their renovated city was airy, bright, and hygienic — free from the squalor of narrow, dark, twisting streets. With its new light filled boulevards, markets, piazzas, public parks, scenic riverside promenades, and panorama, the modernized city of Florence could now be comfortably compared to other European capitals such as Vienna, London and Paris.

For some however, the urban redefinition of Florence undertaken between the 1860s and 1890s was problematic. This sentiment was voiced most vociferously by the foreigners, above all, the Anglo-Americans, who lived in, or frequently visited, the city. Ironically, the very individuals who enjoyed the modern amenities of their native London decried similar features in Florence. In their eyes, the modern features undermined the romantic character of Florence, and by extension Tuscany.

There was a certain element of tension between Florentines who were eager to have a modern city and the foreigners who thrived on nostalgia. After all, the expatriate community referred to by E. M. Forster had for decades perpetuated the image of historic Tuscany through scholarship, fiction writing, public patronage, private commissions, and collecting<sup>19</sup>. The writing of Henry James (including *Italian Hours* and *Autumn in Florence*),

opposite  
Telemaco  
Signorini  
sketching in  
the Piazza  
Sant’Andrea,  
an area of the city  
destroyed during  
the nineteenth-  
century urban  
renewal project  
in Florence, from  
Luciano Artusi  
and Vincenzo  
Giannetti,  
*A vita nuova:  
Ricordi e vicende  
della grande  
operazione  
urbanistica che  
distrusse il centro  
storico di Firenze*,  
1997

<sup>18</sup> Jacob Burckhardt, translator by Diego Valbusa, *La Civiltà del secolo del Rinascimento in Italia*, (Florence: Sansoni, 1876). Subsequent editions of this book were published in 1899, 1927 and 1940.

<sup>19</sup> For studies on the community of foreigners living in Florence see Maurizio Bossi and Lucia Tonini, eds., *L’idea di Firenze. Temi e Interpretazioni nell’Arte Straniera. Atti del Convegno, Firenze 17-19, December 1986*, (Florence: Centro Di, 1986); Marcello Fantoni, editor, *Gli anglo-americani a Firenze. Idea e costruzione del Rinascimento*, (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 2000); and Irene Marchegiani Jones and Thomas Haeussler, editors, *The Poetics*







Villa le Balze,  
Fiesole  
(Photo: Cosimo  
Lipparini)



### Villadom

Many of the villas located in the hills around Florence were owned or rented and/or restored by members of the Anglo-American community. They comprised what Aldous Huxley derided as “Villadom”.

Once in Tuscany it was inexpensive to live. Janet Ross purchased Poggio Gherardo because life was cheaper than that which she left behind in Alexandria, Egypt. As Henry James noted in his 1877 essay *Italy Revisited*, most of the villas were “offered for rent (many of them for sale) at prices unnaturally low; you may have a tower and a garden, a chapel and an expanse of thirty windows, for five hundred dollars a year”. Some wealthy Britons even went to Italy to escape punitive taxes or to live in the grand style on reduced incomes. The Anglo community felt at home in Florence. They were able to read several English newspapers; *The Florence Gazette* (renamed *The Italian Gazette*) (1890-1907), *The Illustrated Florence News* (1894-95), *Fiorenza* (1905-06), *The Florence Directory* (1909-13) and *The Florence Herald* (1909-17).

Fin-de-siècle Florence was an Anglo paradise that reads like an edition of *Home and Garden*. The network of residents was large — as many as 30,000 out of a city population of 200,000 by 1908. John Temple Leader, who contributed funds for the completion of the Duomo façade, lived first at the Villa Maiano and then at Vincigliata outside Fiesole, a medieval-style castle he created with the help of architect Giuseppe Fancelli from ruined remnants (beginning in the 1850s), incorporating architectural fragments salvaged from the city’s urban renewal — a parallel to Stanford White’s interiors.



Frederick Stibbert's (1838-1906) villa, which figures as a destination for its "remarkable collection of armour" in the Horner sisters' *Walks in Florence*, also used architectural fragments. An un-named villa was purchased by Joseph Lucas who recorded the joys of living there in his 1913 *Our Villa in Italy* — establishing a genre long before Frances Mayes. The American Charles August Strong (1862-1940) used his wife's Rockefeller fortune to build a Renaissance-style villa in Fiesole. Across the road from Strong's le Balze was the Villa Medici commissioned by Cosimo il Vecchio and designed by Michelozzo (although reattributed by some to Alberti). The villa had had a series of Anglo owners including William Blundell Spence (author of the famous *Lions of Florence* and an important collector of Primitives) beginning in the 1830s. As of 1910 it was owned by Sybil Cutting who had Cecil Pinsent and Geoffrey Scott redesign the garden according to what were understood to be Renaissance ideas (a geometric design of boxwood hedges). Pinsent later converted the ground floor into a library, recovered a loggia thought to have been originally built by Michelozzo and white washed the walls. Vernon Lee (1856-1935), the childhood friend of John Singer Sargent, owned the Villa Palmerino. As of 1910 George Sitwell owned the Castello di Montegufoni. Bernard and Mary Berenson rented and then purchased I Tatti, located on land that belonged to the Vincigliata estate, beginning in 1900. From their door the Berensons could see Janet Ross's Poggio Gherardo — a villa and three farms where wine and olive oil was produced and vegetables raised. Willard Fiske bought the Villa Gherardesca. The Actons lived at La Pietra which they purchased in 1907. Built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century by the Sassetti family and given its present form in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, its garden proved to be a popular place to paint as is demonstrated by William Merit Chase during one of his many Florentine sojourns and much later by Prince Charles on his first honeymoon. The Crawfords bought the Villa Palmieri.

There were numerous sumptuously decorated palazzi in town as well — including that of Thomas Adolphus Trollope (1810-1892) and his wife the poet Theodosia (1816-1865) in the new (1840s) Piazza Maria Antonia (renamed Piazza dell'Indipendenza during Italian Unification). Their house, one of many luxurious houses facing the piazza was a gathering place for Anglo society including Elizabeth Barret Browning and her husband Robert. The house also provided a place to display the Trollope's collection of armor, majolica, and books. It is not surprising that the Trollopes lent several swords as well as a terra cotta tabernacle with a Madonna and child to their neighbor Marco Guastalla in 1861 who organized an exhibit of Medieval and Renaissance objects drawn from 92 private collectors. At the same time as this exhibit held in seven rooms in the Guastalla house in Piazza Maria Antonia, Guastalla was busy creating installations of objects from the period at the Bargello for a new museum of Medieval and Renaissance decorative arts.



Lizzie Boott  
Duveneck, Villa  
Castellani,  
watercolor, 1887  
(Photo: Stanford  
University)



opposite  
John Singer  
Sargent,  
*Breakfast in the  
Loggia*, oil on  
canvas, 52.1 x  
71.1 cm, c. 1910,  
depicts Lady  
Richmond and  
Jane de Glehn  
at the Villa Torre  
Galli in Scandicci  
where Sargent  
stayed during  
the fall of 1910  
(Photo: Freer  
Gallery of Art  
and Arthur M.  
Sackler Gallery,  
Smithsonian  
Institution,  
Washington, D.C.;  
Gift of Charles  
Lang Freer,  
F1917.182a-b)

On the south side of Florence was Lady Paget's Villa Bellosguardo, Mabel Dodge's Villa Curonia and Lady Scott's Villa Capponi.

Numerous residents rented villas. This was the case for Mark Twain at the Villa Viviani. It was also true for the painter Francis Boott, his daughter Lizzie, and her husband Frank Duveneck as well as the writers Constance Fenimore Woolson and Henry James, all of whom rented apartments in the Villa Castellani from Louisa Greenough (sister to Horatio) — a haven for Anglo-American artists (over 30 years in the case of Boott). Woolson describes the site in her 1887 short story *Dorothy*. Henry James purportedly used the villa Castellani as the setting for Gilbert Osmond's house in *The Portrait of a Lady*. Others merely visited. The American painter John Singer Sargent stayed at the Villa Torre Galli in Scandicci in the Fall of 1910 where he painted Lady Richmond having breakfast with Jane de Glehn. While these villas were pseudo rural retreats with panoramic views of Florence, Villa la Foce was different. Located in southern Tuscany, it was an agricultural estate owned by Antonio and Iris Origo. Iris had grown up in the Villa Medici as the daughter of Sybil Cutting. So, while La Foce was removed from Florence, it was connected to the Anglo-American milieu. The Anglo-American community was tight — its members rarely interacted with Italians and seemed shockingly unaware of the innovative activities happening in the valley below whether it was the work of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Macchiaoli or the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Futurists. In fact, the Anglo Saxon community was incestuous. Berenson and Cutting had





an affair which ended when Cutting married Berenson's acolyte Geoffrey Scott. At one point Berenson accused Vernon Lee of plagiarism. Edith Wharton who visited both Berenson and Lee dedicated a book to the latter. This was after Wharton visited and wrote about John Temple Leader's home. Wharton's long time travel companion Percy Lubbock who lived at Gli Scafari, a villa on the Gulf of Spezia designed by Cecil Pinsent married Cutting in 1926 after her divorce from Scott. The Berenson's stayed with Janet Ross while I Tatti was being renovated. And it was Janet Ross who located a villa for Mark Twain to rent.

Many of the villas claimed an association with Boccaccio. Janet Ross promoted the landscape of Poggio Gherardo as resembling the *Decameron* — with yellow tulips, wild violets, and red anemones, hedges and honeysuckle along a long road. Fiske claimed that Boccaccio used to hang out at a previous house on the site of the Villa Gherardesca. And the Crawfords asserted that the *Decameron* stories had been told at their 14<sup>th</sup>-century Villa Palmieri.

The Anglo Americans often brought their own staff; maids and cooks. Georgina Grahame who wrote on Italian gardens had a Scottish maid and an English cook. Both Grahame and Cutting complained that Italian staff were inept and ignorant. More importantly, a 1920s law made it difficult to fire Italian workers. For foreigners who did not like Italian food, a foreign cook was essential. In this way Janet Ross was unusual. She raised vegetables that she sold at the Florentine market and published a cookbook of Italian food. Poggio Gherardo like most of the Florentine villas was commandeered during WWII.



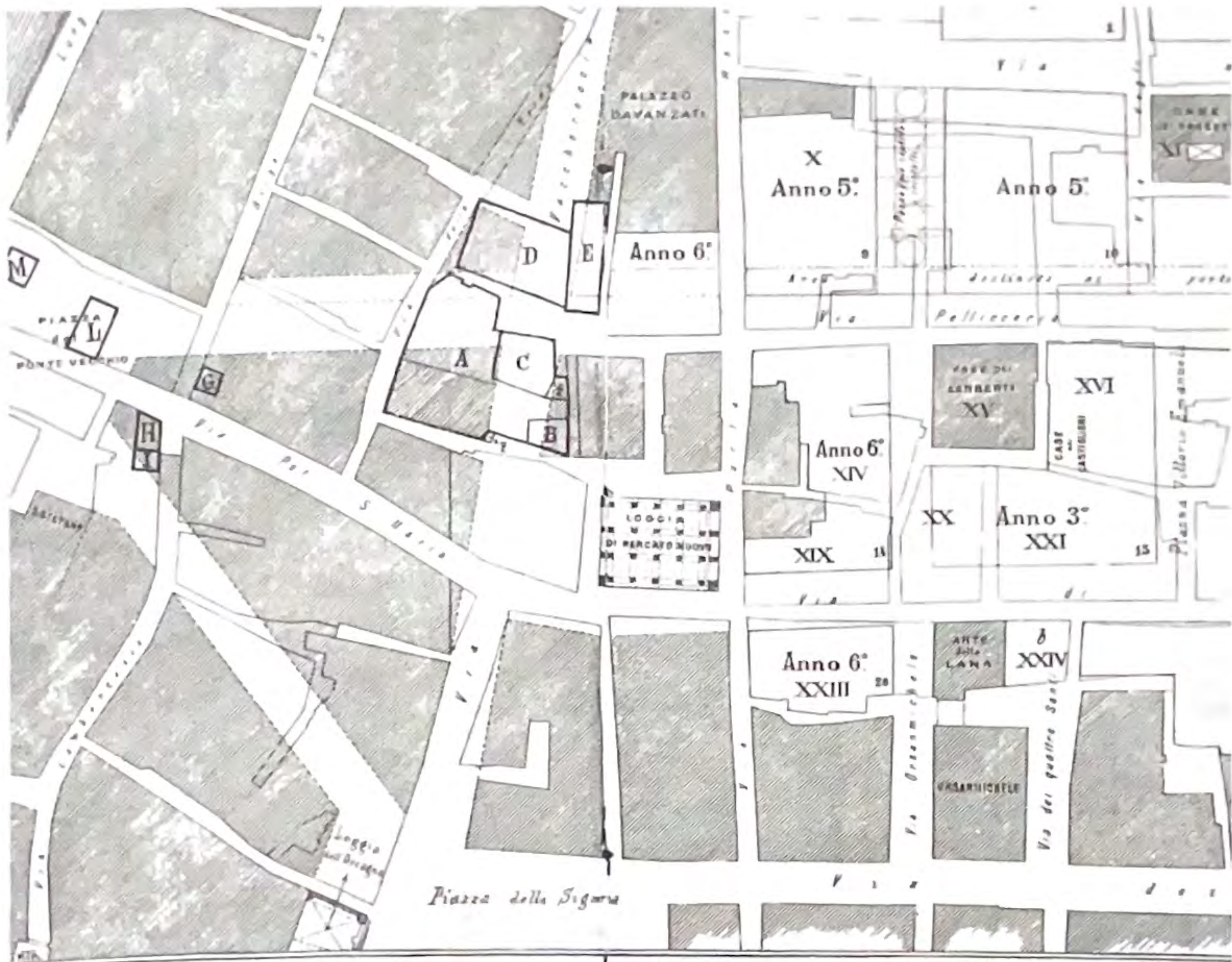
guidebooks of Janet Ross (*Florentine Villas*), collections of John Temple Leader, and copies of paintings and frescoes made by Charles Fairfax Murray, John Bunney and others at the request of John Ruskin<sup>20</sup>, were just some of the ways in which contemporary careers were made, and leisure time spent, collecting, documenting and selling Florence. During the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century distress concerning the urban renewal projects was voiced frequently in the local Anglo papers. As an 1890 article in *The Florence Illustrated Gazette* lamented, the municipality had desecrated the city's historic glory for the sake of "so called" modern improvements. Articles provided history lessons that were well-grounded in local examples. The objective was to encourage the reader to explore and discover the city and its surrounding countryside. Short columns such as "Walks about Florence", and "Drives" helped establish a canon of sites that could be visited. Readers were encouraged to plan day trips to Fiesole, the Certosa in Galluzzo, or Camaldoli. Even the magnificent art collections of fellow Anglicans such as Frederick Stibbert and John Temple Leader were suggested destinations. The emphasis was on discovering the romanticized past; forgotten churches in obscure villages, dusty altarpieces that were uncharted by art historians, and supposedly pristine landscapes untouched by the modern infrastructure. Articles were littered with tirades against modern amenities from new roads, to trolley cars and the city's controversial electric lights that had been installed in 1890. These were interventions which one author referred to as being seemingly "careless and indifferent to the art treasures around them"<sup>21</sup>. It was through such rhetoric that the Anglican reader quickly assumed a patronizing attitude towards protecting the city's past. Tuscany, in its primitive splendor, belonged to the Anglo-Americans. Of course, the city's modern amenities were criticized selectively. Those that condemned the effect of the streetlights and trolley cars were the same individuals that enjoyed other modern conveniences. *The Illustrated Gazette*, filled with articles that advocated for the preservation of the past also boasted abundant advertisements for the city's fine hotels, English style tea rooms, and state-of-the-art pharmacies. Foreign visitors found solace in the fact that they could visit Florence without giving up the conveniences of home. The colonizing interloper could comfortably lobby for the preservation of the city's picturesque pre-modern character from the convenience of their modern hotel rooms.

of Place, *Florence Imagined*, (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2001).

<sup>20</sup> On the English and Italian copyists employed by Ruskin see Jeanne Clegg and Paul Tucker, *Ruskin and Tuscany*, (London: Ruskin Gallery, 1993). Charles Fairfax Murray painted copies of paintings by Lippi, Botticelli, Fra Angelico, Gozzoli, Lorenzetti, Perugino and others mostly for John Ruskin. See Sandra Berresford, "Preraffaellismo ed Estetismo a Firenze negli ultimi Decenni del XIX Secolo", in Bossi and Tonini, *I'Ida di Firenze*.

<sup>21</sup> Guy de Maupassant, "Florence", *The Florence Gazette*, January 31, 1891.





Proporzioni di 1 a 1000

- |                             |                         |                            |                        |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| A - Palazzo di Parte Guelfa | D - Palazzo de' Canacci | G - Torre de' Baldovinetti | L - Torre degli Amidei |
| B - Arte della Seta         | E - " de' Giandonati    | H - Torre de' Girolami     | M - Torre de' Consorti |
| C - San Biagio              | F - Loggetta del Vasari | I - Torre de' Gherardini   |                        |

**Map outlining the proposal for several new streets in the center of Florence, 1898, from the *Bollettino della Associazione per la Difesa di Firenze Antica*, March 1901.** The new Via Pellicceria can be seen cutting across the upper portion of the map from the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II, through the Piazza di Parte Guelfa, to a proposed "Piazza del Ponte Vecchio". A new street was to have been laid from this piazza, past the church of San Stefano, to the Piazza della Signoria. The Via Vacchereccia in turn was to have been widened and extended from the Via Tornabuoni (located just off the top of the map) to the Piazza della Signoria at the bottom. The proposed project would have necessitated the destruction of the Palazzo di Parte Guelfa (A), the Arte della Seta (B), the church of San Biagio (C), the Palazzo de' Canacci (D), the Palazzo de' Giandonati (E), the Loggetta del Vasari (F), and the towers of Baldovinetti (G), Girolami (H), Gherardini (I), Amidei (L), and Consorti (M).

The Anglo community was thus primed in 1897 when Florence Mayor Pietro Torrigiani announced a plan to further alleviate the city's congestion and improve sanitation in the city center. The local government hoped, among other things, to extend the arcade of Via Pellicceria which formed the western edge of the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II, through the Piazza di Parte Guelfa to the Ponte Vecchio. This would have necessitated the complete destruction of the group of 14<sup>th</sup>-century buildings located in the Piazza di Parte Guelfa, including: the Palazzo



The Villa Landor,  
c. 1890  
in the collection  
of Kroch Rare  
Books and  
Manuscripts  
Division, Cornell  
University  
(Photo:  
Athanasiou  
Geolas)



### Willard Fiske @ the Villa Landor

Willard Fiske, Cornell University's first librarian, retired to Florence in 1892 with a sizeable inheritance. He purchased the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Villa Gherardesca in Fiesole, former home to the English poet Walter Savage Landor. While Fiske was in town to renovate the villa he was listed amongst the many English and American residents and visitors in the 1892 *Florence Gazette* — a copy of which he kept in his possession. As Fiske's acquisition demonstrates Italy was attractive to 19<sup>th</sup>-century people of independent means or desirous of a semblance of independent means as a place where a high standard of living could be maintained at a lower cost than elsewhere in Europe. Anglo-Americans could live in villas surrounded by vast gardens and populated by staff — something they could not necessarily afford at home.

Once ensconced, Fiske became well known within the expatriate community as a congenial host. Hundreds of individuals left their calling cards. A frequent visitor to the Villa Gherardesca was Samuel Clemens or Mark Twain who stayed at the Hotel New York on the via Tornabuoni (a hotel which Collodi tells us was the most central and comfortable in all of Florence) and then spent a year at the Villa Viviani (formerly the villa Belvedere) neighboring Fiske's home, writing *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Clemens' calling cards are amongst Fiske's papers along with cards for Janet Ross and her niece Lina Duff Gordon, Bernard Berenson, Violet Paget, Charles Eliot Norton (who taught the first art history course in the United States at Harvard and translated Dante) and Maxfield Parrish (en-

opposite  
Calling cards  
left for Willard  
Fiske at the Villa  
Landor,  
in the collection  
of Kroch Rare  
Books and  
Manuscripts  
Division, Cornell  
University  
(Photo: Anna  
Mascorella)

R

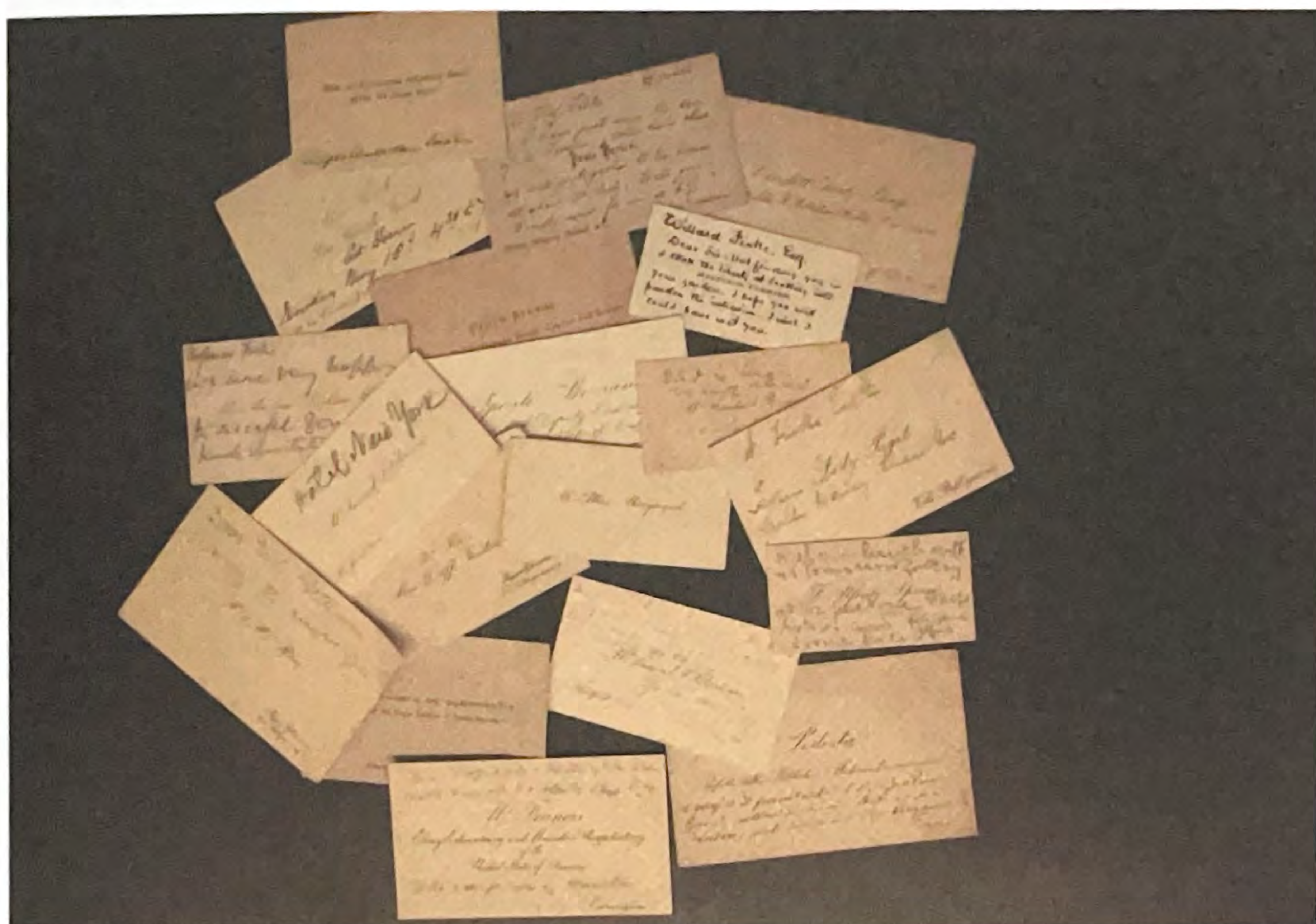
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grossed in illustrating Edith Wharton's 1904 book *Italian villas and gardens*) who noted that he took the liberty of walking around Fiske's garden.

One calling card notes that Twain would see Fiske the next day for lunch at the home of Janet Ross. Ross (1842-1927) was an English woman who lived in Tuscany for more than 60 years. She wrote histories of Lucca, Pisa, and Sicily, several guidebooks to Florentine villas, and a popular Tuscan cookbook that included recipes requiring butter, heavy cream and spices like cinnamon and peppercorns — ingredients that were more English than Tuscan. Ross's regular Sunday salons, held at her home, the Villa Poggio Gherardo located near Berenson's I Tatti, brought members of the expatriate community together for conversation. It was here that Bernard Berenson was married. Ross aptly earned the moniker "the Queen Bee of Tuscany". Her villa was even recommended in the *English Gazette* as a stopping point on a drive out of town. Simultaneous with their socializing, Fiske, Ross, and other expatriates in neighboring villas — including Violet Paget (a.k.a. Vernon Lee) who lived at the Villa Palmerino from 1885-1935 and Leo Stein (brother of Gertrude) who lived in Settignano from 1914-1947 — were known as scholars, collectors and writers.

In the early 1890s Fiske himself amassed one of the finest collections of Dante literature now in existence outside Florence. This coupled with an impressive collection of material on the Italian poet Petrarch was given to Cornell. Fiske's investment underscores the extent to which Italian culture was valued in the States. As Mark Twain observed in his *Autobiography*, everything about Italy deserved attention, including the door handles of his rented villa.



**Piazza di Parte  
Guelfa, Florence,  
as seen after  
the restoration  
work of Giuseppe  
Castellucci**  
(Photo: Alinari  
BEN-F-009916-  
0000)



di Parte Guelfa, the seat for the Arte della Seta, the Palazzos Canacci and Giandonati, as well as the church of San Biagio. It also would have required reworking the Piazza Santo Stefano and the partial destruction of the neighboring Palazzo Davanzati, a portion of the scenic Via delle Terme, and numerous towers including that of the Palazzo Baldovinetti located at the intersection of Por San Maria and Borgo Santi Appostoli. These were among some of the most historically significant sites in the vicinity of the Ponte Vecchio. In 1898 members of this community joined forces with a group of Florentines to form



a local monument watch group known as the *Associazione per la Difesa di Firenze Antica*, or the Association for the Defense of Old Florence. The formation of the Association was propelled by the proposal of a commune-sponsored urban renewal project. The goal of razing the buildings was to create a wide street flanked by a series of modern (electrified and plumbed) neo-Renaissance style apartment buildings.

The Association successfully challenged this project and in the process helped reshape attitudes towards the medieval and Renaissance past. Through its various public activities the group played an important role in defining and promoting a certain image of historic Florence. By convincing the general public that the city's past was vital to its contemporary civic identity and economic health, the group swayed opinion against the proposed urban renewal project and ultimately the civic authorities who had the right to decide the course of urban renewal. It was argued that it was both culturally responsible and financially astute to invest in the preserving of the past. By uniting historians, the history friendly, and businessmen in an innovative alliance, the Association established a wide base of support. The legacy of their efforts remains visible today as the image and essence of the city's identity, and commercial viability remains firmly rooted in its history.

There was a nuanced relationship between the goals of urban modernization and historic preservation. Contrary to what one might think, these goals were not necessarily at odds. Not only did interest in the urban history peak in response to 19<sup>th</sup>-century urban renewal projects, but by the 1890s the city's new roads, promenades, piazzas and buildings actually helped to accentuate historic structures and spaces. Of course, the interest in the past was selective. Certain sites were preserved and displayed at the expense of others. Florence was re-configured as an urban museum to its medieval and Renaissance past. All told, Florence deployed modern strategies of urban display in order to telescope its history. The city was stripped so as to accentuate particular moments and monuments.

The expatriate outcry against the proposed demolition of the Piazza di Parte Guelfa was tremendous. Vernon Lee, the prolific British author, and a prominent figure in the Florence cultural and social scene, wrote to the *London Times* in December 1898 publicizing this latest threat to Florence's historical center. Her essay took the form of a letter written to the Florentine mayor Pietro Torrigiani<sup>22</sup>. She claimed that the proposed project would necessitate the destruction of the oldest, most historical, and picturesque quarter in Florence, one filled with admirable examples of Florentine palazzi and primitive towers. She pointedly noted that the plan would cause the complete "Haussmannization of the city"<sup>23</sup>. This was not only

<sup>22</sup> Vernon Lee, "Letter to the Editor", *The London Times*, December 15, 1898.

<sup>23</sup> *Bollettino della Associazione per la Difesa di Firenze Antica*, 1900, p. 64. John Ruskin also decried the moderniza-



“scandalous” she argued, but could only be described as “self-mutilation”. It was “unjustifiable” even in light of hygienic needs.

Lee suggested that those concerned with saving Florence should use the media of “lectures, newspaper articles, and, pamphlets” to educate the public about the city’s “historic spirit”. The “well preserved historical character” of the city, she noted, was its chief attraction<sup>24</sup>. And it should be protected at all costs. And considering that Florence was already beginning to face stiff competition from other towns, such as Siena and Perugia, she suggested that Florentine hotel owners and shopkeepers should take an active interest in protecting their city’s unique character. Maintaining an attractive destination for visitors would increase revenue she argued<sup>25</sup>. Protecting historical tradition for consumption was good business.

Lee was able to quickly mobilize fellow Italophiles in the fight to save Florence. Included among those who joined the crusade to oppose the mayor’s project were painter Edward Poynter, the director of the National Gallery; the Earl of Carlisle who sat on the board of the National Gallery; the artist Walter Crane who at that time was president of the Royal College of Art; Thomas Stirling Lee, director of the London Corporation of Artists; and the London-based painter Lawrence Alma-Tadema. Perhaps more importantly, Lee quickly found allies amongst a group of influential native Florentines.

One of the Florentines who was inspired by Lee’s polemical letter was the prince, senator, and former Florentine mayor Tommaso Corsini. Corsini conceived the formation of a multi-national coalition to “curate” the monuments of old Florence. This *Associazione per la Difesa di Firenze Antica* was founded in 1898 with the objective “to arouse in the citizens an interest in, and a love for, the preservation and the custody of the old national memorials”. Florence, Corsini noted, (in language that was borrowed directly from Lee) had been “seized with the mania for the modern” allowing “the destruction of what is most attractive as if fearing that any opposition would undermine the city’s primacy amongst the “progressive” cities”. More to the point he claimed that “The sons of the city of Art were destroying [sic] the very cradle of Art”. As he himself noted, Corsini was not the first to organize such a preservation group. By 1898 similar groups already existed elsewhere in Europe. The British Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (affectionately known as SPAB) was founded by John Ruskin’s acolytes William Morris and Phillip Webb in 1877. In 1890 the *Associazione Artistica fra i Cultori di Architettura* was launched in Rome

tion of Florence and Venice as modern imitations of Paris. See John Ruskin, *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, Vol. 12, (London, 1904), p. 427.

<sup>24</sup> *The London Times*, December 15, 1898.

<sup>25</sup> *Bollettino*, 1902, p. 41.



to undertake an inventory of medieval architecture and if necessary, oversee restoration<sup>26</sup>. And the Municipal Commission of Old Paris was established in 1897 to keep a watchful eye over the medieval remnants of the city. It was in collaboration with this latter group that Eugène Atget photographically documented the city's architectural heritage. With these models on hand, Senator Corsini assembled an impressive cast of characters for the Florence Association — men who had dedicated their lives to studying and celebrating the past<sup>27</sup>. One Florentine member astutely observed that “nobody has written about our history, our art, and the glorious past of Florence, better than English people. The works of Ruskin and Symonds would suffice, and to these we must add a long string of learned writers, lecturers, on Florentine history and art”<sup>28</sup>. In recognition of the important role played by the resident Anglo-American community in the fight to preserve and protect Renaissance Florence, Corsini ensured that each of the Association's meetings were advertised and summarized in *The Illustrated Gazette*.

In the end, the Association prevailed. It convinced mayor Pietro Torrigiani to cancel the proposed demolition of the buildings in the Piazza di Parte Guelfa and to halt construction of an extension to the via Pellicceria. Once the piazza was saved the group then proposed that Association member and respected Aretine architect Giuseppe Castellucci restore the buildings in the piazza, as well as the nearby church of San Stefano — returning them to “their previous glory” — a task which he did over the course of the next decade<sup>29</sup>. Both Gabriele d'Annunzio and Alfonso Rubbiani applauded his efforts<sup>30</sup>.

Today the Piazza di Parte Guelfa is an active center of the city — a “picturesque piazza” (to borrow the words of Telemaco Signorini). The restored buildings house a variety of civic institutions. The church of San Biagio has been converted into a communal library. The Palazzo di Parte Guelfa serves as an exhibition space. And the Palazzo Giandonati houses the administrative offices for the city's annual Renaissance-style festival the *Calcio in Costume*.

Ironically, it is the city's 19<sup>th</sup>-century urban form that enabled historic buildings to stand apart. Certain structures were suppressed (literally, through their destruction), while others were amplified using diverse urban strategies. Set against the relatively homogeneous designs of Poggi and others, structures such as the Palazzo Vecchio, Orsanmichele, and the Duomo were theatrically monumentalized. Widened avenues (such as that which lead from

<sup>26</sup> Among other projects the Associazione Artistica fra i Cultori di Architettura oversaw the restoration of Santa Maria in Cosmedin. The group published a journal called the *Annuario*. See Richard Etlin, *Modernism in Italian Architecture 1890-1940*, (Cambridge, 1991), p. 131.

<sup>27</sup> “A Plea for Old Florence” *The Illustrated Gazette*, May 17, 1898.

<sup>28</sup> “The Defence of Florence” *The Illustrated Gazette*, December 13 1898, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> On the institution of the Parte Guelfa and its building, see Diane Finiello Zervas, *The Parte Guelfa, Brunelleschi and Donatello*, (New York, 1987).

<sup>30</sup> *Bollettino*, 1902, p. 45.



the Duomo to the Palazzo Vecchio), piazzas, and other architectural devices (such as the triumphal arch that framed the Palazzo Strozzi) laid out a series of new spatial sequences and urban relationships that emphasized the city's past and established links between significant sites of the city. As the architect Edoardo Detti noted in a book on the destruction of the former ghetto, it was not until the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century that Florence actually emerged as a Renaissance city<sup>31</sup>.

Like Haussmann's work in Paris, Florence was restructured for the modern consumer. Even if Haussmann and Poggi had distinctly different political agendas, the experience they sought to create was similar. Over the course of the last three and a half decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Poggi remade the city of Florence by transforming it into a cosmopolitan international center. New boulevards, piazzas, riverside promenades, and panorama endowed the city with a modern concept of public space. More specifically, the city was designed to be consumed by the 19<sup>th</sup>-century flâneur. These new public spaces — whether it was the scenic view of the Arno from the Cascine promenade, or the picturesque skyline as seen from the Piazzale Michelangelo — placed the city on display.

And yet, while Florence was modernized in terms of consumption and spectacle that were analogous to the 19<sup>th</sup>-century urban renewal of Paris, the Florentine program accomplished different ends. The new Florence, with its open layout, generous avenues, transportation networks, bourgeois neo-Renaissance style housing stock, and central commercial centers around the new Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II, reinforced the consumption of a specifically Renaissance past. Urban features such as the boulevard (an example being the widened via dei Calzaiuoli) and the panoramic views created the connection between the past and the present by providing a meeting place for the bourgeoisie to collectively consume the city's history. By highlighting the Middle Ages and Renaissance, Poggi's urban renewal program actually served the purposes of the Association which sought in part, to promote the medieval and Renaissance city.

We must remember that while contemporary historians overlook the importance of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century urban renewal project in favor of discussions on the architecture and urbanism of the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, their very vision of the Middle Ages and Renaissance is itself a 19<sup>th</sup>-century construction. Herein lies Poggi's fortuitous genius. Contemporary scholarship on Florentine medieval and Renaissance architecture and urbanism is inevitably indebted to 19<sup>th</sup>-century mediation in physical, urban, architectural, and scholarly terms. Whether or not they are aware of it, current scholars of medieval and

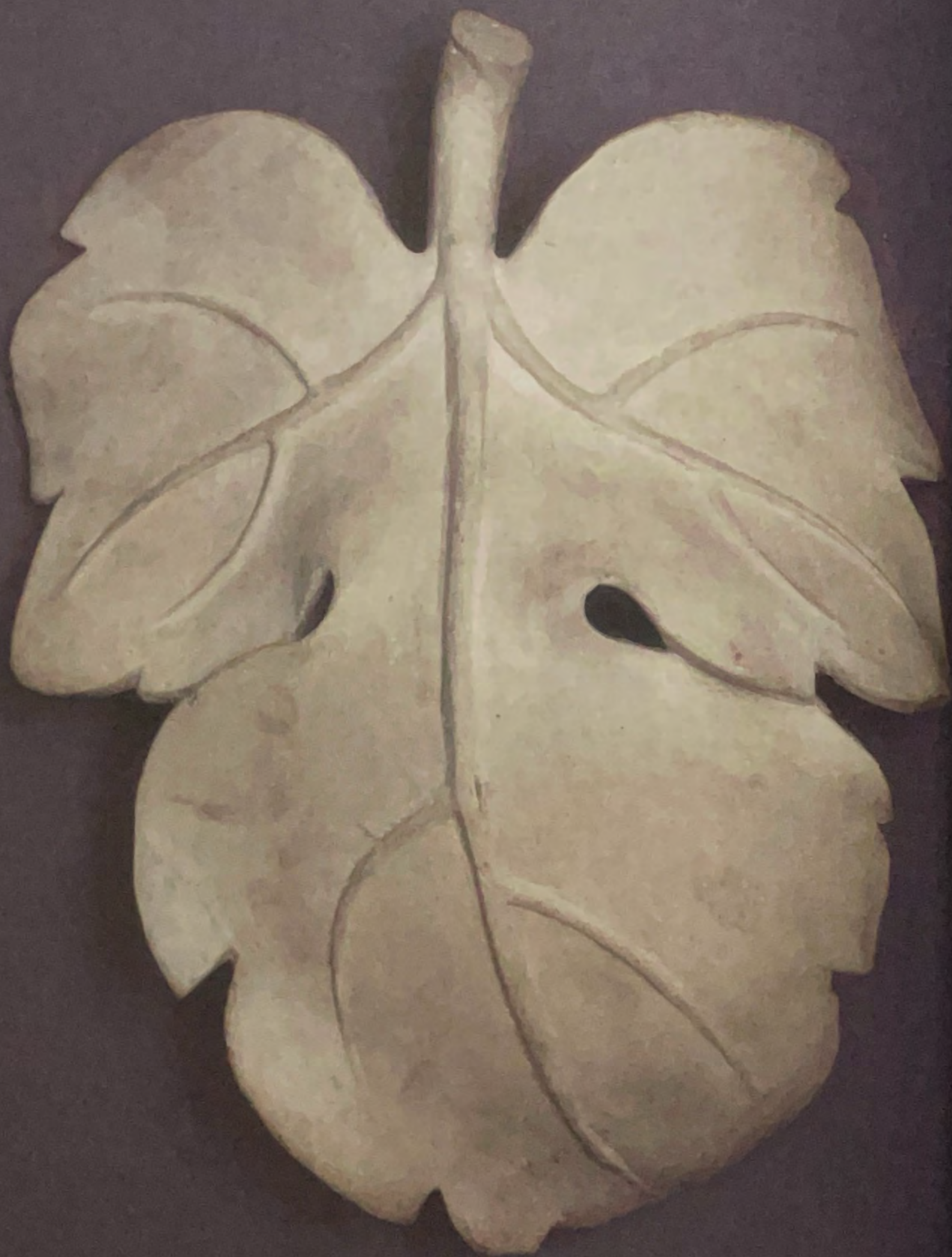
<sup>31</sup> Edoardo Detti, *Florence that Was*, (Florence: Vallecchi, 1970), p. 23.



Renaissance architecture continue to study buildings and spaces that have survived because Poggi selected them for his version of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and because groups such as the Association intervened to make sure they survived. Those seeking the remnants of golden age Florence must be apprised the idea of the “authentic” medieval and Renaissance city was in itself a modern construct. It is clear that in Florence during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was a delicate relationship between modernization and preservation — with the former being undertaken in the name of the latter. The very urban fabric of the city was used to mediate and narrate both the popular and scholarly perception of the city’s past. To the extent that the common perception of the city remains rooted in the Middle Ages and Renaissance one need not look further than the cover page of a contemporary city bus map. The cover depicts a series of familiar monuments; the Palazzo della Signoria, the Ponte Vecchio, Duomo, and Pitti Palace among others. The monuments are seen in isolation. They are de-contextualized, wrenched from their urban matrix. Some might see this as indicative of the current trend of “museification” that has taken place in historic cities such as Florence. As one scholar has recently claimed, Florence is “a controlled, stable and purified environment that is akin to the lands that make up the uninhabited megalopolis of Disneyland”<sup>32</sup>. Indeed, it is immediately apparent to any mildly observant tourist that the city has been transformed into a profitable Renaissanceland which conveniently elides the Middle Ages and Renaissance into one. Drawn by enticing guidebook descriptions, tourists arrive in the Piazzale Michelangelo by the bus load, stand in long lines to view Ghiberti’s Gates of Paradise, buy vinyl umbrellas in the shape of the Duomo, and pass indifferently through the Piazza della Repubblica on their way to the Palazzo Vecchio. Despite the grandiose and monumental nature of the piazza, it does not register on the touristic or scholarly itinerary. An appreciation for the Middle Ages and Renaissance, to the exclusion of all else, is an attitude that was first cultivated by Poggi and the Association, which claimed to have been inspired by the rhetoric of Burckhardt and the Anglo community that sought to protect the picturesque past. While once representing opposing views on urban renewal, the efforts of Poggi and the Association have merged. By seeking out medieval and Renaissance monuments and patronizing local hotels, restaurants, and shops, the tourist is living proof that Vernon Lee was right. Celebrating the past is good investment. And as Poggi demonstrated, the destruction of some monuments allowed for others to be accentuated. New views, perspectives, and adjacencies were created, which ultimately allowed for a re-reading or experience of the city so as to emphasize the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

<sup>32</sup> Pasquale Verdicchio, “Renaissanceland”, in *The Poetics of Place, Florence Imagined*, edited by Irene Marchegiani Jones and Thomas Haeussler, (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2001), p. 197.







One of the rarest and most delicate pleasures of the continental tourist is to circumvent the compiler of his guide-book (Edith Wharton, *Italian Backgrounds*, 1905)

### The Guided Trip

Nineteenth-century Anglo travel to Italy increased dramatically with the introduction of the railroad connecting Great Britain with the rest of Europe. By the 1860s travel between England and Italy was fairly easy. One could leave Dover and be in Turin 35 hours later. Another 12 hours brought a traveler to Florence. By 1892 a train trip between London and Florence took only 28 hours. Tickets could be purchased from the Thomas Cook Agency based in London.

Travel by boat from the United States was almost as easy. By the 1840s the Cunard line could speed across the Atlantic in 10 days. In the 1890s transatlantic trips occupied some 100,000 Americans annually. According to some statistics, more than a million Anglo-Americans traveled to Italy over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Already during his 1828-1829 stay in Florence, James Fenimore Cooper noted that there were so many Americans abroad that “one is apt to ask who can be left at home”<sup>1</sup>. One report notes that some 5,000 tourists were in Rome at Christmas in the 1840s<sup>2</sup>.

Many, if not most of these tourists, were not educated as the Grand Tourists had been in the centuries previous. This new middle class traveler was not classically trained, did not necessarily know Latin, and certainly did not travel in the company of an entourage of tutors. They certainly didn’t travel as Lord Byron had in 1817 with five carriages and seven servants. Most

<sup>1</sup> James Fenimore Cooper, *Gleanings in Europe: Italy*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), N.Y., 1983, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Lynne Withey, *Grand Tours and Cook's Tours. A History of Leisure Travel 1750 to 1915*, (New York: William Morrow and Company Inc., 1997), p. 59.

**David's fig leaf, attributed to D. Brucciani & Co., London, c. 1857.**

The fig leaf covered David's genitalia during visits by royal ladies to the cast gallery.

It was created for Queen Victoria and used until the time of Queen Mary who died in 1953

(Photo: Victoria & Albert Museum, REPRO 1857-161:A)



# The Florence Gazette

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**THE FLORENCE GAZETTE** is the only English periodical published in this city devoted entirely to local topics and Anglo-Italian interests, such as Art, Music, Sport, Amusements, Society, etc.

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## VILLA PALMIERI

statues and vases, and the steeply steps sweeping down to the lower gardens where stand those big red Impatiens, pots containing lemon-trees, is certainly worthy the name of "paradise."

Villa Palmieri, the property of a descendant of Her Majesty the Queen of England, is but a short mile from Florence and stands on the lower slope of the Fiesolan hills. On leaving the town the road skirts the stream named Mugnone until it reaches the entrance-gate, whence a sharp rise leads up to the villa. To the right is the garden backed by a steep hill-side, planted some fifteen years ago by the late Earl of Crawford and Balcarres with trees of every description. The grounds are most



THE first name by which this splendid villa was known when it belonged to Cione di Fiesi, was happy enough, Schifanoja, (banish care). Then it came to be called De' Tre Viti, perhaps from a fount with a head of Janus, or from a bas-relief representing the three heads of the Trinity, which was once to be seen in a bastion-wall of the villa. The Tolomei bought it from the Fiesi family some time late in the fourteenth century, and afterwards sold it to Matteo di Marco Palmieri in 1464, who improved and added to the house; but Palmiero Palmieri his descendant, was the man to whom it owes its present splendour. In 1670-80 he transformed it into "a most noble palace," and called it by his own name. He threw the archway across the old road to Fiesole, which used to separate the house from the garden, and thus formed the spacious terrace from which there is such a lovely glimpse of Florence. With its

ENTRANCE GATE

DESCENT FROM TERRACE TO GARDEN

VASCA GRANDE

beautiful, and one of our illustrations shows the spot where the Queen broke fast when the weather is fine, looking down on the fair City of Florence from under the drooping branches of the fine weeping willows. In the pleasure grounds to the north of the villa stands the picturesque and rather eastern-looking ancient chapel, a sort of loggia, was added by Matteo Palmieri. A private chapel for Protestant service is in the villa itself. Another of our illustrations shows the noble

## A forgotten visitor: Queen Victoria

Queen Victoria (ruled 1837-1901) long harbored a fascination with Italy — largely inspired by the collecting interests of her husband Albert. Between 1845 and 1851 she and Prince Albert built a Renaissance-style summer home (Osborne House) on the Isle of Wight, which was turned over to the State following Victoria's death. Albert launched the Raphael Collection, 4,000 prints and photographs of prints, considered in the mid-19th-century to be by or after Raphael. Their love of things Italian represented their orthodox taste. In 1857 the Grand Duke of Tuscany presented the Queen with a copy of Michelangelo's David made from a mold of the original fashioned by Clemente Papi. Queen Victoria gave the copy to the new art museum in South Kensington (what is now called the

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Victoria & Albert Museum) and had a plaster fig leaf (1/2 meter in length) made to cover the sculpture's offending genitalia.

Victoria visited Florence several times as an adult. In 1888 her month-long stay with her daughter Princess Beatrice and an entourage of 70 people at the Villa Palmieri in Fiesole was so gratifying that she contemplated purchasing her own villa nearby. Although she did not purchase a villa she did acquire several paintings and sculptures including a commissioned copy of a Fra Angelico crucifixion.

Four dedicated rail cars were required to bring her to Florence for the 1888 visit. She was greeted at the station with great fanfare and escorted in an open carriage through the city streets to the Villa Palmieri where she was a guest of Lady Crawford. Images in the *Illustrated London News* kept her constituents abreast of her activities.

The Villa Palmieri was one of many villas owned by members of the expat Anglo-American community in the environs of Florence and with its extensive garden was a frequent destination of visitors and artists. The painter J.M.W. Turner is known to have sketched views of Florence there.

In 1893 Victoria spent another month at the Villa Palmieri — a visit that was chronicled by Janet Ross in a special edition of the *Florence Gazette*. And in 1894 she returned to the city, this time spending a month at the Villa Fabbricotti adjacent to the Villa Stibbert owned by the Anglo-Italian Sir Frederick Stibbert an important collector of art.

During her various Florentine stays she visited John Temple Leader's Villa Vincigliata strolled through the gardens at Bellosguardo, Pratolino, and the Boboli, the galleries at the Pitti, the promenade in the Cascine, the via dei Colli, attended a Holy Saturday procession at Ponte a Ema, had tea at the Villa Petraia, looked at the frescoes of Andrea del Sarto in the church of Santissima Annunziata and visited Lady Scott (grandmother to Queen Elizabeth II) at the Villa Capponi.



### Buying Ginori Ceramics

The Ginori Porcelain company was founded in 1737 in Doccia (today a part of Sesto Fiorentino) a few kilometers west of Florence. At its height the factory produced everything from dinnerware to life size statues including Gaspero Bruschi's (a sculptor employed by the company until 1778) 1747 copy of the famous Medici Venus. The company used clays dug on the Island of Elba and near Lucca. *John Murray's Handbook* recommended the "excellent porcelain" already in 1854. Much of the company's production made its way to various places in Europe. Company stores could be found in Lucca, Livorno, Bologna and Naples as well as Lisbon, Madrid and Constantinople. The colorful sculpture was reminiscent of Della Robbia ware — which Ginori copied as described by Helen Zimmern in 1897. A museum, designed by Pier Nicolò Berardi (of the Gruppo Toscano) was built in front of the industrial complex. In 2013 the company, with its 308 employees, declared bankruptcy and Gucci acquired it with the hopes of launching their own line of luxury tableware. The museum closed in 2017.



**Medici Venus, by Gasparo Bruschi,**  
Ginori Manufacture, glazed porcelain, 132 cm high, 1747-  
1748 (Photo: Museo Nazionale del Bargello)





Various items made of cotto (Photo: [www.chianti.com/itineraries-in-chianti/impruneta.html](http://www.chianti.com/itineraries-in-chianti/impruneta.html))

### The Cotto of Impruneta

The distinctive red palette of Tuscany comes from the *cotto* or terracotta of Impruneta — clay dug in the river valleys of the Ema and Greve. As early as the 11<sup>th</sup> century the terracotta of Chianti was used for roof tiles, floors, and statues. The material's porosity makes it ideal for plants. Its color makes it attractive and its resistance to weathering makes it perfect in a variety of year-round uses. Brunelleschi chose *cotto* tiles to cover his famous cupola. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century numerous businesses were devoted to *cotto* production in part because abolition of taxes on clay products meant a period of prosperity. John Murray recommends purchasing the commonplace earthenware.



opposite  
Cecil, played  
by Daniel Day  
Lewis reads  
a Baedeker  
guidebook  
in the 1985  
film *A Room  
With A View*  
(Photo: Frame  
Enlargement)

tourists were dependent on guidebooks for information as to what to look at and why, as well as the names of restaurants and shops to patronize.

For the English-reading audience, there were two principal travel guides; the popular German born Baedeker, which was launched in 1827 and quickly translated into English, and John Murray's London-based handbook series, which began in 1836 with its first edition dedicated to Northern Italy (which covered Tuscany) published in 1842. Both were relatively compact (the Murray hand book measured 4¾ by 7¼ inches and the Baedeker 4⅝ by 6⅜ inches), densely informative, largely textual (the Baedeker included some elevations and plans, both had maps), red in color and therefore easily identifiable. They provided the reader with in-depth instructions on which sites were worth visiting, how long one should stay, where one should shop, sleep, and eat.

They carefully scripted an experience for the foreign visitor — educating the tourist about art, architectural and urban history while choreographing their movements and consumer habits. Maria Antonella Pelizzari notes that the guidebook “left little room for random wanderings and chance encounters”. The “pre-packaged descriptions” of the guidebooks reduced “foreign cultures to one orderly grid”<sup>3</sup>. It has been estimated that Murray's *Handbook to Switzerland* was used by 200,000 middle class British tourists<sup>4</sup>. We can imagine that the Italian editions were even more popular.

The red handbook was a “symbol of modern tourism”<sup>5</sup>. Edith Wharton observed that the Baedeker provided a “sight-seer's accepted curriculum”<sup>6</sup>. Guidebooks such as these showed the traveler not only what to see but how to look. Thanks to these guidebooks 19<sup>th</sup>-century travelers to Italy gravitated towards cities such as Venice, Florence, Rome, and Naples while making forays into some of the smaller towns such as Sienna [sic], San Gimignano and Lucca as these were the sites that were discussed at length within the pages of the guides.

Complementing the guidebooks were the English language newspapers such as the *Illustrated Gazette*, which provided a comforting list of other Anglo-American travelers in temporary residence at the various *pensioni* and hotels, as well as rented apartments and villas. The *Gazette* also featured advertisements for products from home, tips on what to

<sup>3</sup> Maria Antonella Pelizzari, “Retracing the Outlines of Rome: Intertextuality and Imaginative Geographies in Nineteenth-Century Photographs”, in *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, edited by Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), p. 63.

<sup>4</sup> Jan Palmowski, “Travels with Baedeker: The Guidebook and the Middle Classes in Victorian and Edwardian Britain”, in *Histories of Leisure*, ed. Rudy Koshar, (New York: Oxford International Publishers, 2002), p. 114.

<sup>5</sup> Elsa Damien, “Ruskin vs. Murray: Battles for Tourist Guidance in Italy”, *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, vol. 32, no. 1 March 2010, pp. 19-30, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> Edith Wharton, *Italian backgrounds*, (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1905), p. 181.





look at when at the Uffizi, articles on historical topics, publicity for institutes and libraries, advice for managing a home abroad as well as a listing of events that would be of interest. The latter included a series of “illustrated” lectures given by Helen Zimmern, the first editor of the *Gazette*, and Annie Evans during the winter of 1898-99 on Florentine architecture.

According to the *Gazette*, their weekly lantern-slide lectures were “presented in a comprehensive and pleasing manner”, and included “all that is most essential to be known about the monuments and the art of the city... drawing upon facts found only in old manuscripts and libraries”. Such events, coupled with the community of English speakers to be found in attendance at religious services held at neo-Gothic churches (such as the Church of the Holy Trinity founded in 1844 on the via Lamarmora, St. Mark’s English Church built on the Via Maggio in Florence 1881 or St. James American Episcopal Church founded in 1908 on the via Rucellai) meant that the foreign became immediately familiar. Even the un-informed traveler could manage a trip to Italy with relative ease. And thanks to Baedeker and Murray, there was no need to venture beyond the geography outlined by the guidebook.

The omni-presence of the guidebook was parodied by period writers. Henry James noted that tourists walked about with Baedekers sticking out of their pockets<sup>7</sup>. And when they were mis-

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<sup>7</sup> Henry James, *Italian Hours*, (New York: Grove, 1909), p. 191.



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## Helen Zimmern and other Radical Florentine Women (written with Whitten Overby)

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Florence drew outspoken, professional women to visit, live and work. Some of these women remained unmarried (Helen Zimmern, Maria Louise Ramé, Johanna and Susan Horner), some had affairs with Italians (Janet Ross) or younger married men (Mary Ann Evans), married late (at the age of 40 in the case of Lizzie Boot), married men who were penniless (as Lina Duff Gordon did when she married Aubrey Waterfield against her family's wishes), hated their husbands (as did Edith Wharton, were avowed lesbians (as was Violet Paget), changed their names (Violet Paget became Vernon Lee, Maria Louise Ramé became Ouida, Mary Ann Evans became George Eliot, and Emily Francis Strong became Emilia Dilke), challenged authority (as Emilia Dilke did to Ruskin and Edith Wharton to Bernard Berenson), wrote (Constance Woolson and Edith Wharton) and lectured (Annie Evans) prolifically, and were eccentrics (Maria Louise Ramé had 30 dogs at one point). Each contributed to the discourse of Italian studies in profound ways — often relating past history to contemporary culture. In doing so they laid the ground work for later Futurist and anarchist narratives: Ana Banti, Orianna Falacci who provided alternative narratives to the glories of the male-dominated Renaissance. Henry James popularized the term “New Woman” to describe a burgeoning class of (often happily single) career women in Europe and America. All of these women were new women.

opposite  
Vintage poster  
for the 1924  
film *Romola*  
starring Lillian  
and Dorothy  
Gish, 70 x 100  
cm (Photo: [www.  
nordicposters.  
com/movieposter/  
Romola+\(1924\)](http://www.nordicposters.com/movieposter/Romola+(1924)))

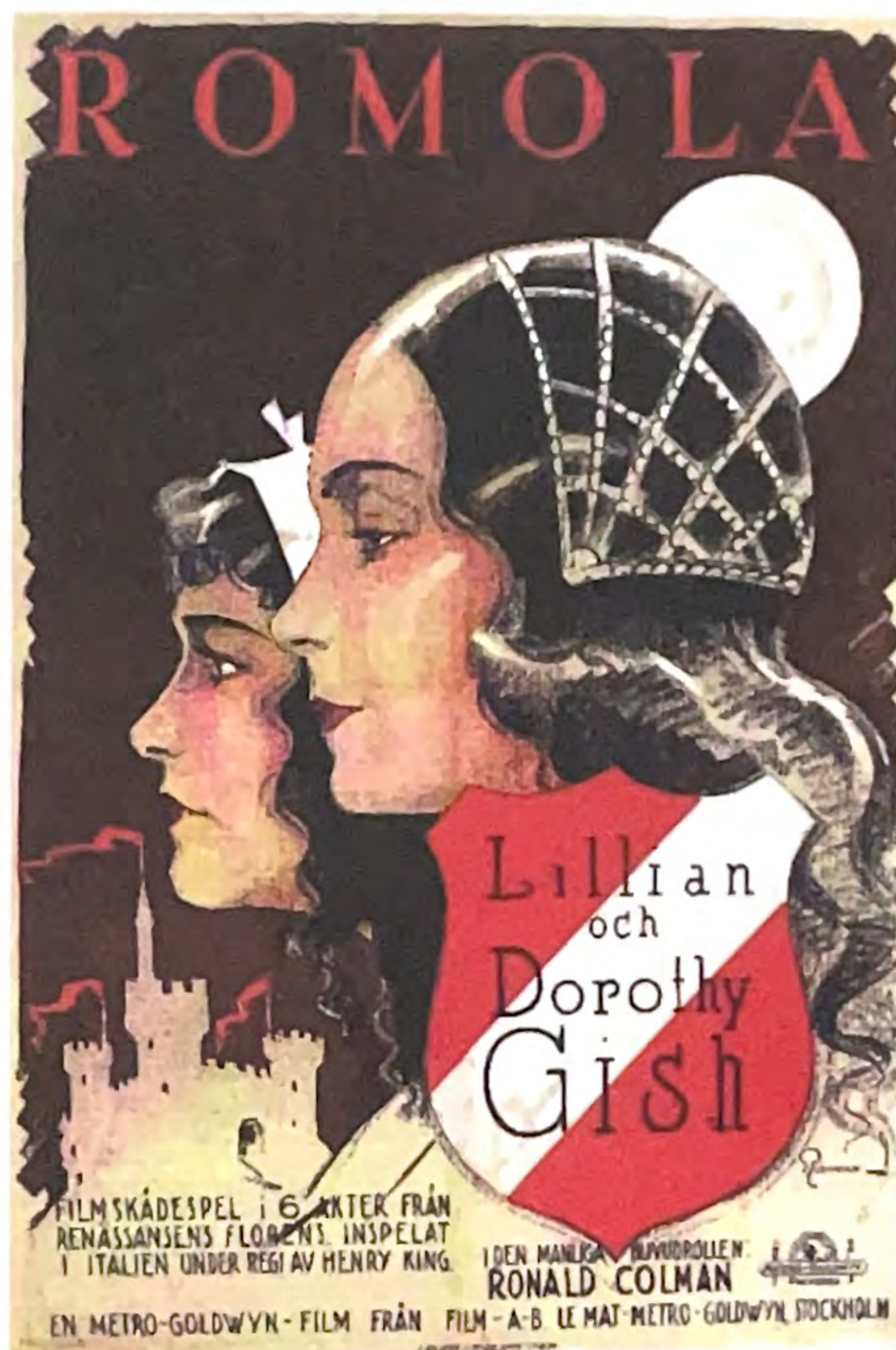
One of the central figures in this feminist Florentine landscape was Helen Zimmern, a German-British author-translator who contributed to the *Examiner*, *Fraser's Magazine*, *Blackwood's Magazine*, *the Athenaeum*, *the Spectator*, *St. James's*, *Pall Mall Magazine*, *the World of Art*, and the Italian *Rassegna Sentimentale*. Zimmern wrote on contemporary politics (*The Italy of the Italians* in 1906 and *Italian Leaders of Today* in 1915), and architecture (*The Hansa Towns*, 1889), translated Nietzsche (with whom she was good friends), published books on German philosophers Arthur Schopenhauer in (1876) and Gotthold Lessing (1878) and edited the *Florentine Gazette* during its first years from 1890-1894. Under her leadership the *Gazette* successfully re-scripted the historical Italian landscape for feminine rebirth.

Zimmern used a masculine genre, the 19<sup>th</sup>-century print newspaper to reach a primarily female readership (or “Lady Readers” as she editorialized in 1891) that was largely unshackled by male travel companions; the visitors' and residents' logs, printed weekly as part of the *Gazette*, attest to the many Anglophone women traveling without men. In the process the *Gazette* helped establish Florence as a place where women could create a



society autonomous from masculine domination — unlike in England or the United States. Zimmern's corpus of authored and edited work argues against a preoccupation with historical influences, especially the sorts of burdens imposed by conservative ideologies that had become wrapped up with the Italian Renaissance. The degree to which Zimmern admits that Italian Renaissance architecture was an imperial culture relates to her feminist proclivities: she is hyper-aware of how space is experienced in the immediate present, rather than being swept up in the aesthetic splendor of the past. It is clear that she wants to make an intellectual contribution that looks to the future, and not by rehearsing old arguments about Renaissance forms.

The *Gazette* privileged announcements about expatriate Anglo-American female authors and artists, articles by women as well as advertisements aimed at women (for Elvira Parenti's corsets, Madame Cassi's dresses, the Ladies' Agency which located furnished apartments and houses, the Convalescent Home for Women located outside the Porta Romana, Arturo Colosci's painting classes for ladies and Ladies Cognac available at the Anglo-American Stores), advancing the notion that there was a distinctive feminine discourse being produced in Italy. It should come as no surprise that Zimmern (sister to the prominent British female suffragist Alice Zimmern) promoted Italian suffrage (which would not become law until 1946).







Alinari showroom on the ground floor of the Palazzo Spini Feroni (Photo: Alinari B/112 b)

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### Susan Horner Tries to Guide Visitors

The British writer Susan Horner kept a diary from 1861-62 during an 8-month stay in Florence. The diary was illustrated with her own sketches as well as photographs produced by Fratelli Alinari and available from various agents throughout the city. By 1874 Alinari had its own showroom at the foot of the via Nazionale — a popular destination where customers could buy framed photographs of an Italian painting or individual photographs that they could tip into their journals or a purchased book such as an edition of Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*. By 1889 Brogi, a competitor to Alinari, had a showroom on the via Tornabuoni. And by the 1930s Alinari had a second showroom nearby.

Horner was in many ways a typical foreigner in Florence. She kept a journal, purchased photographs (as this was before the advent of the portable individual camera), copied paintings in the Uffizi on a daily basis often in water color (she was an amateur painter unlike Charles Fairfax Murray who served as John Ruskin's professional copyist in Tusca-







placed, tourists were often at a loss as to what to do — as was the case with E. M. Forster's character Lucy Honeychurch in *A Room With a View*. Lucy found herself lost in the Florentine church of Santa Croce with no Baedeker. The insufferable Cecil however, always seemed to have his.

As is evidenced by the journey of Lucy Honeychurch and her aunt, the travel guide also functioned as an “emancipatory tool”<sup>8</sup>. Using the books provided women with a certain independence from men. Guidebooks meant that women now had the tools to travel alone. Women did just that, and in short order were writing their own travel guides. More than 65 travel books were written on Italy by American women during the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>9</sup>. For individuals, whether male or female, who did not want to travel alone or necessarily organize their own trip, they could count on jaunts sponsored by the Thomas Cook agency. Founded in the 1840s, Thomas Cook & Sons began by organizing chartered tours within Great Britain. By 1863 they had begun to organize trips to Italy — rushing through Venice and Florence in two days, Rome in two and a half, with a one-day excursion to Naples, Pompeii and Vesuvius. Cook was soon able to orient his Italian trips to a middle-class clientele consisting of families, teachers, ministers, and single women. By the mid 1860s, women figured as the majority in most of his trips. Cook's trips were so successful that the agency was able to introduce infrastructural elements to facilitate sightseeing. Cook sold coupons for trains, hotels, and food, allowing tourists to avoid being troubled by currency conversions. Among other things Cook built a funicular on Mount Vesuvius which enabled tourists to get to the top of the volcano with great ease. While Cook's tourists (derisively known as *cookies*) were criticized for rushing from site to site in large groups, Cook countered that “it was better to see Italy in three weeks than not at all”<sup>10</sup>. By the 1870s, Cook & Son expanded to include tours of the Middle East, Scandinavia, and soon after Spain, India, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. Despite this impressive range, Italy remained one of the most popular destinations.

There was a group of Anglo-Americans who felt the need to distance themselves from middle class tourism. It was a common trope of professional 19<sup>th</sup>-century Anglo-American writers — whether travel writers, novelists, or historians — to separate themselves from the generic tourist by claiming that they had no need for a guidebook. They sought to make it clear that they knew Italy well enough to maneuver without an interpreter. E.M. Forster claimed that he traveled without a Baedeker. And yet he was certainly famil-

<sup>8</sup> Palmowski, “Travel” p. 115.

<sup>9</sup> Mary Suzanne Schriber, “Edith Wharton and the Dog Eared Travel Book” in *Wretched Exotic: Essays on Edith Wharton in Europe*, edited by Katherine Joslin and Alan Price, (New York: P. Lang, 1993), pp. 147-154, p. 150.

<sup>10</sup> Wuihey, *Grand Tours*, p. 165.



iar enough with the book, so as to be able to parody it at length in his various writings. Lucy Honeychurch, the lovingly naïve character of his *A Room With a View* takes up “Baedeker’s *Handbook to Northern Italy*” early in the novel whereupon she commits “to memory the most important dates of Florentine History”<sup>11</sup>. She is subsequently chastised by her companion Miss Eleanor Lavish for looking up everything in the Baedeker. Another character in the book seems to understand the disparagement of the guidebook when she internalizes the difference between the tourists who rely on the guidebook, and those who do not. When thinking about the educated chaplain Mr. Eager, Miss Bartlett notes that:

He was a member of the residential colony who had made Florence their home. He knew the people who never walked about with Baedekers, who had learnt to take a siesta after lunch, who took drives the pension tourists had never heard of, and saw by private influence galleries which were closed to them. Living in delicate seclusion, some in furnished flats, others in Renaissance villas on Fiesole’s slope, they read, wrote, studied, and exchanged ideas, thus attaining to that intimate knowledge, or perception, of Florence which is denied to all who carry in their pockets the coupons of Cook<sup>12</sup>.

And yet, despite his repeated and articulate parody of guidebooks such as the Baedeker and tour guide companies such as Thomas Cook & Sons, E.M. Forster considered the Baedeker to be an invaluable resource — so much so that he lent his mother’s copy to a young family friend (the historian Martin Bernal) embarking on his first trip to Italy.

As if to reaffirm their expertise, many of the Anglo-American writers who wrote about Italy in either a fictional or non-fictional way proclaimed that they knew the country better than the standard guidebook author. As Henry James wrote about Rome “The place proved so endlessly suggestive that perception became a throbbing confusion of images, and I departed with a sense of knowing a good deal that is not set down in Murray”<sup>13</sup>. Stendahl claimed that he was able to make his way around Florence without a guide<sup>14</sup>. Some writers, such as Wharton claimed to have discovered hitherto unknown sites.

There was tremendous irony in this desire to ascertain expertise, as guidebook companies were heavily dependent upon a group of highly educated, seasoned, and anonymous travelers to contribute text to the books. None other than John Ruskin wrote about Italian hotels for the John Murray handbook series, and perhaps more significantly revised Murray’s text on Florence, Lucca, Carrara, and Pisa for the second edition of the handbook for *Northern*

<sup>11</sup> E.M. Forster, *A Room With a View*, (Charleston, South Carolina: Nabu Press, 2010), p. 15.

<sup>12</sup> Forster, *A Room With a View*, p. 48.

<sup>13</sup> James, *Italian Hours*, p. 148.

<sup>14</sup> Silvia Ross, “Forster’s Florence and Stendahl Syndrome”. in *The Poetics of Place: Florence Imagined*, ed. Irene Marchieghiani Jones and Thomas Haussler (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2001), p. 97.



*Italy*, published in 1846 and revised in 1847<sup>15</sup>. He also wrote on Venetian churches for the series. Samuel Butler, who wrote the first English guide to the *sacro monte* of Varallo in 1888 sent notes to John Murray for inclusion in his revised version of *Northern Italy*. While Ruskin derided the Murray text, complaining that it was responsible for misattributions, unwarranted praise for artists such as Bronzino, and neglect of Gothic material, he was evidently familiar with it. In fact, his wife Effie noted in an 1849 letter to her mother that during their trip to Italy they used Murray constantly. The handbook was “invaluable and we never turn a step without it being useful”<sup>16</sup>. We must wonder if Ruskin knew that she had written this while he was busy undermining the book. Fifty years later in 1898 the German art historian Aby Warburg agreed to revise the Baedeker guide to Florence — desiring above all to underscore the city’s modern amenities<sup>17</sup>. Educated writers such as Ruskin pretended that they had no need for a guidebook. And yet all evidence seems to counter this. Charles Dickens was hostile to the traveler’s “slavish fixation on the guidebook whenever abroad” and yet reliant on his own copy of Murray<sup>18</sup>. Henry James used Murray’s guide during his first trip to Venice<sup>19</sup>. And one must wonder what Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain, John Pierpont Morgan, Willard Fiske (Cornell University’s first librarian who restored the Villa Gherardesca, once owned by the poet Walter Savage Landor in Fiesole), Margaret Fuller, and Henry Walters (who founded the Walters Collection in Baltimore) read in preparation for their visits to town. They read some sort of guide, even if they pretended that they did not. Interestingly, James, Wharton, and Forster had no compunction about quoting John Ruskin’s *Mornings in Florence* (1875), which they all seemed to own — but not his travel tips anthologized in the popular red book. While these self-proclaimed experts belittled the Baedeker and Murray guidebooks (the former of which recommended reading Ruskin and the latter advertised his writings), they appear to have been dependent on alternative guides. These included Ruskin, which James admits reading and Wharton had in hand during her 1881 trip to Italy<sup>20</sup>; Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Marble Faun*, which James claimed was necessary for any tourist<sup>21</sup>; Stendhal, whose *Rome, Naples et Florence* of 1826

<sup>15</sup> Damien, “Ruskin vs. Murray”, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> Effie Ruskin notes this in a letter from November 19, 1849 in Mary Lutyens, ed, *Effie in Venice* (London: John Murray, 1965), p. 73.

<sup>17</sup> Bernd Roeck, *Florence 1900: the Quest for Arcadia*, (New Haven, Conn. and London: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 49.

<sup>18</sup> Palmowski, “Travel”, p. 105.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p. 109.

<sup>20</sup> Sarah Bird Wright, *Edith Wharton’s Travel Writing. The Making of a Connoisseur*, (New York: St. Martins, 1997), p. 36.

<sup>21</sup> Pelizzari, “Retracing”, p. 67.



both James and Wharton reference; the *Walks*<sup>22</sup> of the Misses Horner which James references; and Byron, whom Sophia Hawthorne repeatedly cites. In addition, they most likely had read Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's translation of Dante (1867). Later visitors probably read Freud's thoughts on da Vinci (1910) and Michelangelo's sculpture of Moses (1914). So, while most writers did not admit to using guidebooks, they certainly read travel literature. Some have argued that Ruskin's *Mornings in Florence*, which was published as a series of small and inexpensive — 10 pence — volumes, each featuring what to do on a different day in Florence — was nothing more than a guide book<sup>23</sup>. Many read books before they travelled. As a result, Italian cities were filled, as James noted, with “many memoried streets”<sup>24</sup>. Everything was already “familiar” according to Goethe. This was so much the case that Freud admitted to having vivid dreams about Rome before he even went there<sup>25</sup>. The art historian Ernst Gombrich astutely concluded, “the innocent eye is a myth”<sup>26</sup>. People arrived in Italy already familiar with what they were going to see. Lady Sydney Morgan noted this to be the case already in 1821<sup>27</sup>. Mark Twain acerbically noted, there was nothing in Rome for him to see that “others had not seen before”. “What was there for him to touch that others had not touched?” What could he discover, he asked in his own travel book, *The Innocents Abroad*? “Nothing whatsoever”, he concluded<sup>28</sup>.

James and Wharton certainly attempted to seek out things that were off-season, obscure, or preferably unknown. James thrived on avoiding the crowds. He sought out the “un-trodden spots and hidden corners” — the parts of town not mentioned in the guides. It was as if his ability to survive in these obscure sites was testament to his innate ability to travel without the help of a textual mediator<sup>29</sup>. James noted in an essay entitled “The After Season in Rome” that most tourists were gone by May. Before that, he lamented,

You are never first or never alone at the classic or historic spots where you have dreamt of persuading the shy genius loci into confidential utterance; it isn't simply that St. Peter's, the Vatican, the Palatine, are forever ringing with the false note of the languages without style: it is the general oppressive feeling that the city of the soul has become for the time a monstrous mixture of watering-place and curiosity-shop and that its most ardent life is that of the tourists who haggle over false intaglios and yawn through palaces and temples<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Henry James on Italy, *Selections from Italian Hours*, (New York, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988), p. 180.

<sup>23</sup> On the success of *Mornings in Florence* see Rachel Dickinson, *Journeys of a Lifetime: Ruskin's Continental Tours* (Lancaster: Lancaster University 2008) pp. 26-7.

<sup>24</sup> Henry James, *Italian Hours*, (New York: Grove Press, 1979), p. 269.

<sup>25</sup> Sharon Kivland, *Freud on Holiday. Vol. 1, Freud Dreams of Rome*, (York, England, Information as Material, 2006).

<sup>26</sup> E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion. A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 298.

<sup>27</sup> Lady Sydney Morgani, *Italy*, (New York: C.S. Van Winkle, 1821), pp. 330-331.

<sup>28</sup> Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 267.

<sup>29</sup> James *Italian Hours*, p. 193.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 190





**The English Cemetery in Piazzale Donatello, c. 1865 (Photo: Alinari ARC-F-007954-0000)**

As is clear, James sought to differentiate himself from the throngs of foreigners whose motives for visiting Rome he deemed as not necessarily as pure as his own. Of course even when traveling during the height of the tourist season, an obvious way to distinguish oneself was to enjoy an unhurried visit. Ruskin berated tourists for rushing through sites, devoting only a half an hour to visiting the Florentine church of San Lorenzo and spending only minutes in Santa Maria Novella's Spanish Chapel. Unlike the mass tourists, writers such as James celebrated the fact that they spent months in a given city, returned repeatedly to sites, or ambled undirected. These writers gave the appearance that there was nothing rushed about their visit. James noted when discussing the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, "I have seated myself more than once again at the base of the same column"<sup>31</sup>. At other moments during his 5-month stay in Rome during 1873, he appears to have spent whole afternoons in the Borghese Gardens leisure-

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, p. 148



ly lying in the sun with his head propped against the base of a pine tree. Evidently this is not the trip of a tourist inclined to rush from site to site. Indeed, he spent his time going for long luxurious walks, daydreaming about returning to Rome for an even longer period of time, and being in residence at the Academie de France at the Villa Medici. We know that he did spend an extended period of time during 1886-1887 living in the Villa Brichieri in Bellosguardo, situated in the hills overlooking Florence, writing *The Aspern Papers*. And despite his public disdain for Italy, and Florence in particular, Mark Twain similarly spent an extended period of time in the city — completing *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* (which was serialized in 1893-4 in *the Century*) as well his *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* (serialized in *Harpers* in 1895) while in residence at the Villa Viviani in Settignano<sup>32</sup>. Lina Duff Gordon wrote that during that time Twain even shaved “his superabundance of hair... endeavoring to become thoroughly Italian”<sup>33</sup>. Presumably such leisurely musings and actions were not within the purview of the guidebook-reading mass tourist who was on a mission to visit the important sites in Italy within a short period of time.

James' stay in Rome during the spring of 1873 was certainly leisurely and lengthy compared to most tourists who came to Italy during the season as an escape from the relatively unforgiving climates of London or Boston. There was a sizeable community of Anglo-Americans who stayed even longer, taking up residence in Rome or in the hills north of Florence, purchasing houses, making careers out of collecting or writing about art, and preserving villas, as was the case for Sybil Cutting, Bernard Berenson and Vernon Lee. As the French writer Valéry Lebaud noted with a modicum of humor, “Florence was an American city built in the style of the Italian Renaissance”<sup>34</sup>. The resident Anglo-Americans sought to differentiate themselves from the seasonal tourists. Like James, Wharton, and Forester, they had no need for guidebooks. Mr. Eager, from *A Room With a View* noted when speaking about this community,

We residents sometimes pity you poor tourists not a little — handed about like a parcel of goods from Venice to Florence, from Florence to Rome, living herded together in pensions or hotels, quite unconscious of anything that is outside Baedeker, their one anxiety to get ‘done’ or ‘through’ and go on somewhere else. The result is, they mix up towns, rivers, palaces in one inextricable whirl”<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> Roeck, *Florence 1900: The Quest for Arcadia*, p. 267.

<sup>33</sup> From a letter of 1892 as quoted in Alyson Price, *Florence in the Nineteenth Century. A Guide to Original Sources in Florentine Archives and Libraries for Researchers into the English-Speaking Community* (Florence: Centro Di, 2011), p. 53.

<sup>34</sup> Cristina Tagliaferri, *Un Secolo di editoria 1886-1986: La libreria antiquaria editrice Leo S. Olschki (1886-1945)* (Florence: Olschki, 1986), p. 67.

<sup>35</sup> Forster, *A Room With a View*, p. 51.





Villa le Balze, garden, Fiesole (Photo: Cosimo Lipparini)

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### The Gardens of Fiesole

The first studies on gardens were by Anglo-Americans. Charles Platt wrote *Italian Gardens* in 1884. Georgina Grahame wrote *A Tuscan Garden* in 1902. Edith Wharton wrote and Maxfield Parrish illustrated the influential *Italian Villas and Gardens* for a New York press in 1904.

While the Wharton book dealt with all of Italy it describes several Tuscan gardens in detail including the Boboli gardens and those at the villas Castello, Petraia, Gamberaia, and Poggio Imperiale. Of the Anglo-owned villas only the gardens of the Villas Capponi and Palmieri warrant a brief mention. For the most part Wharton criticizes the English colony for their "neglect of the characteristic Tuscan vegetation and a corresponding disregard of Italian climate and habits".

According to Wharton, there were certain principles defining an Italian Renaissance garden. Broad paths led from one area to another. Shade was accessible in the summer and



sun in the winter. Formal gardens were adjacent to the house. But as one walked further away, natural habitats were present. Very few gardens survived. As Wharton claimed "There is perhaps no region of Italy so rich in old villas and so lacking in old gardens as the neighborhood of Florence".

Renaissance gardens were altered by imported fashions and alien plants. When villas were bought by foreigners "the vineyards and olive-orchards [were] turned into lawns dotted with plantations of exotic trees". And thus the Tuscan landscape was largely transformed. It is interesting to note that many of these gardens were semi-public places. John Murray's Handbooks were among the many guidebooks that encouraged exploration.

In the years after Wharton, George Sitwell wrote his *On the Making of Gardens* (1909). Arthur Bolton wrote *The Gardens of Italy* in 1919. Geoffrey Jellicoe and J.C. Shepherd published their *Italian Gardens of the Renaissance* with measured drawings in 1925. These authors either lived in or visited the Anglo Saxon villas and gardens of Tuscany. It is no surprise that Mussolini sought to reclaim garden scholarship from the foreigners for Italian scholars. He even authorized a plagiarized Italian version of Wharton's book.

A principal proponent of the idealized Renaissance garden was Cecil Ross Pinsent, (1884-1963) an English architect who spent 28 Years in Tuscany designing gardens and houses. His version of the Renaissance landscape continues to resonate — a combination of English horticultural customs and Italian traditions. His first commission, when he was still in his mid 20s, was to design Bernard Berenson's garden at the villa I Tatti. He collaborated with Geoffrey Scott who oversaw the restoration of the villa.

He then designed Charles Strong's villa and garden *le Balze*. His third project was to modernize the Villa Medici and extend the garden for Sybil Cutting. Both projects were undertaken upon the recommendation of Berenson. In each case he contrasted formal Renaissance gardens with more wildly natural areas basing his design on Renaissance paintings rather than garden archaeology — a non-existent discipline at the time.

At the Origo villa La Foce, Pinsent oversaw the restoration of the *fattoria*, the creation of several gardens, a cemetery and the expansion of the estate. He spent months at a time at the Origo property working on various projects.



Mr. Eager sought to include himself within the community of Anglo-Americans that sometimes stayed so long their family trees bore the evidence. Not infrequently the children of the Anglo-American community were born in Italy — as was the case for Florence Nightingale, born in 1820 to British parents and named after her birthplace (her sister was born in Naples). Many foreigners stayed permanently in Italy — dying abroad and buried in Protestant cemeteries in Rome and Florence. The Romantic poets Keats and Shelly were both buried in Rome following their deaths in Italy. The British poetess Elizabeth Barrett Browning was buried in the so-called English cemetery in Florence (founded in 1827) in 1861 as too was Anna Susanna Horner who died in 1862 during a seven-month stay in Florence where she was recuperating from poor health. As the mother of Joanna and Susan Horner who wrote the popular guidebooks *Walks in Florence and Its Environs* (London, 1873), Susanna Horner was an honorary member of this semi-permanent community. James Fenimore Cooper reminds us upon visiting the cemetery in 1829, that this was an important thing to do for any ex-patriate<sup>36</sup>. The Baedeker and Murray books remained the guides of choice for foreign travelers well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They underscore the extent to which space was always being defined and colonized by someone. This becomes paramount for the landscape between Florence and Rome. This was a landscape that had since the 19<sup>th</sup> century been occupied by and subjected to the imaginings of foreigners and the elite.

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<sup>36</sup> Cooper, *Gleanings*, p. 34.



*Sotto la neve pane e sotto la pioggia fame*

With snow there is bread, with rain there is hunger

(proverb of Tuscan sharecroppers)

I have fancied you in a sort of Arcadian life, tasting rich figs, and squeezing the juice out of the sunniest grapes, and sleeping soundly all night, after a day of simple pleasures

(Nathaniel Hawthorne, *the Marble Faun*, 1860)

Beans with oil and salt are held by the peasants a dish fit for the gods... Foreigners often complain of the large amount of olive oil used in Italian cooking, but, if they would but believe it, oil is far more digestible when used for frying than either butter or fat

(Helen Zimmern, *Italy of the Italians*, 1906)

Today, it would be hard to envision a trip to Italy without gastronomic pleasure. We are indoctrinated to believe that Italy, and in particular Tuscany, is synonymous with good food. Tuscany is known for its landscape, history, artistic legacy, and influence on high culture as well as its culinary prowess. This central Italian region borders the Tyrrhenian sea to the west, the Apennine mountains to the north, includes the areas of Chianti, the Maremma, Amiata, Crete Senesi, and southernmost Orcia River Valley, and contains seven World Heritage sites, one of the most densely designated regions in the world. Tuscany contains the historic centers of Florence, the region's capital (designated in 1982); San Gimignano (1990); Siena (1995); and Pienza (1996); the Cathedral of Pisa (1987); Val d'Orcia (2004), and Medici villas and gardens (2013) located in the environs of Florence. In addition to these magnificent sites Tuscany is famous for its olive oil, wine and pasta.

But this has not always been the case. Food is notably absent from the late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century guidebooks and travel accounts of foreign visitors to central Italy. The well-informed guides to Tuscany by Susan and Joanna Horner, Mrs. Oliphant, and Janet Ross are filled with detailed information regarding art-filled churches, noteworthy architectural sites, and important historical figures. They are however largely devoid of references to food. Indeed, when food is mentioned, it is usually disparaged. For those that ventured into the Tuscan landscape, it would not have looked familiar as it was defined largely by cornfields.





**Cooking class at Ecco la Cucina, near Siena** (Photo: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/6-perfect-places-to-honeymoon-and-leave-your-smartphone-out-of-it\\_us\\_55b2609be4b0224d883200b5](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/6-perfect-places-to-honeymoon-and-leave-your-smartphone-out-of-it_us_55b2609be4b0224d883200b5))

The famous British guidebook to Florence published in 1861 by John Murray warns that the Florentine restaurants are “all indifferent”. Therefore we should not find it odd that his contemporaries sought out familiar food at English hotels. Indeed, there was a well-established network of sources for English foodstuff in cities like Florence. Advertisements in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century English newspaper, the *Florentine Gazette*, included notices for the butter and cream one could buy from the renowned English Dairy, which delivered to stores throughout the city. In a sense, butter was a metonym for the believed superiority of Anglo food. The preoccupation with acquiring butter, whether in restaurants or for home, is evidenced in period guides and diaries and underscores the extent to which it was commonly felt that butter could not be substituted by Italian olive oil — something hard to imagine today. Even Victor Emmanuel II, Italy’s first king and a resident of Florence when the city was the nation’s capital from 1865-1871, preferred butter to olive oil<sup>1</sup>. The idea that olive oil is desirable is fairly recent. The act of dipping bread into olive oil is a trend that dates to 1990 and was spawned in San Francisco, not Italy. A few decades after the Murray guidebook, the writer Francis Wey lamented that Ita-

<sup>1</sup> Pellegrino Artusi, *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), p. xix.



# ENGLISH DAIRY.

## Cascina di San Donato

6, Via Pistoiese

Fresh Milk, Butter, Cream, Eggs, and Fowls fattened by Hearsons System

Orders Received By:

**The Anglo American Stores**, 39, 41 and 43, Via Cavour.

**A. Lemon and Co.**, 19, Via della Vigna Nuova.

**Frattigiani**, 9, Via Garibaldi, and 4, Via Borgognissanti.

**Gaetano Corsini**, 20, Via Porta Rossa.

Advertisement for the English Dairy, the *Florence Gazzette*, December 6, 1890

next pages

The character Lucy Honeychurch, played by Helena Bonham Carter, eating meat in the 1985 film *A Room With A View* (Photo: Frame Enlargement)

ly's food was "bad...stale...carelessly made" and of "poor flavor". Susan Horner noted in her 1861 diary that she had to eat a meal from a Florentine *trattoria* with no fork or a spoon<sup>2</sup>. Her sister Joanna was indisposed with indigestion which she attributed to "hard ham"<sup>3</sup> while her father had a stomach attack brought on by some sort of oil<sup>4</sup>. The writer Constance Fenimore Woolson who wrote social satires set in Italy — penned an 1896 work that seems to center entirely upon the Anglo obsession with hosting high tea in Florence — a foreign culinary invention. Mark Twain noted in the irreverent chronicle of his European tour (*The Innocents Abroad*, 1869) that his "experiences of Florence were chiefly unpleasant"<sup>5</sup>. And yet he subsequently returned to rent a house adjacent to the Villa Landor, in order to write. Presumably he did not eat much. A woman Twain might have commiserated with was Miss Bartlett of E.M. Forster fame, who noted, as she put down her fork in the opening scene of *A Room with a View*, that the meat she was presented with at dinner had "surely [already] been used for soup". (It should be acknowledged that she also complained that there were fleas in the beds, and observed smells emanating from the rooms of her Florentine pensione.) Nathaniel Hawthorne was advised by his friend the sculptor Hiram Powers that Italian poultry and

<sup>2</sup> Susan Horner, diary, October 1861, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Horner, diary, November 1861, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Horner, diary, January 1862, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, (Mineola: Dover Publications, Inc., 2003 reprint of the 1869 book), p. 249.







mutton was not nearly as savory as meat in America<sup>6</sup>. Max Vernon who wrote a guide to the “well-known city” of Florence in 1910 chronicled renting a villa and hiring a cook. “Milk and butter are so rarely visible” he noted<sup>7</sup>. And more importantly, “life became a zucchini-haunted nightmare”<sup>8</sup>. Mrs. Colquhoun Grant, author of the 1912 guidebook *Through Dante’s Land*, complained that waiters used decorations to compensate for the poor quality of the food. Dan Fellows Platt observed that a Lucca hotel did not even know how to serve the cream at breakfast. Most foreign visitors to Tuscany in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries did not come to Italy for the food. Period guides, diaries and travel accounts are filled with such sentiments. Not surprisingly Mrs. Beeton noted in her influential 1861 book *Household Management* that the Italians have no specifically particular article of food — “barring macheroni of course”.

There are exceptions to this disparagement, but they are rare. Charles Richard Weld wrote a book in 1867 entitled *The New Capital of Florence*<sup>9</sup>. He recommended the “excellent” food at La Luna *Trattoria* as well as the *Fenice* Restaurant on the *via Calzaiuoli* even if, as he observed, diners had to contend with two nuisances in such places — the smoking and the pesky girls who tried to sell flowers.

Weld also recommended the Gran Caffé Doney, a teahouse on the *via Tornabuoni* in Florence. This was where most Anglo visitors and residents sought out the familiar texture of crumpets and cream. And it was one of the few places in Florence that sold ice. It is the venue about which Elizabeth Barrett Browning waxed poetic in her 1856 poem *Aurora Leigh*, and it is incidentally the only eating establishment mentioned by Augustus Hare in his famous 1887 guidebook to the *Cities of Central Italy*<sup>10</sup>. Herman Melville went there. And the American folklorist Charles Godfrey Leland apparently had Doney’s coffee delivered to his rooms while in Florence. According to John William de Forest, writing in 1858, it was “the only [café] in Florence where the coffee and butter are almost invariably good”<sup>11</sup>. The café was an important fixture in the foreign gastronomic landscape of Florence for well over 150 years. It was here that the *Scorpioni* (a group of Anglo ladies of the interwar period) sought culinary refuge — made famous in Franco Zeffirelli’s 1999 autobiographical film *Tea with Mussolini*.

<sup>6</sup> *Passages from the French and Italian note-books of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Co.), vol. 2, p. 268.

<sup>7</sup> Max Vernon, *In and out of Florence: a new introduction to a well-known city*, (New York: Holt, 1910), p. 39.

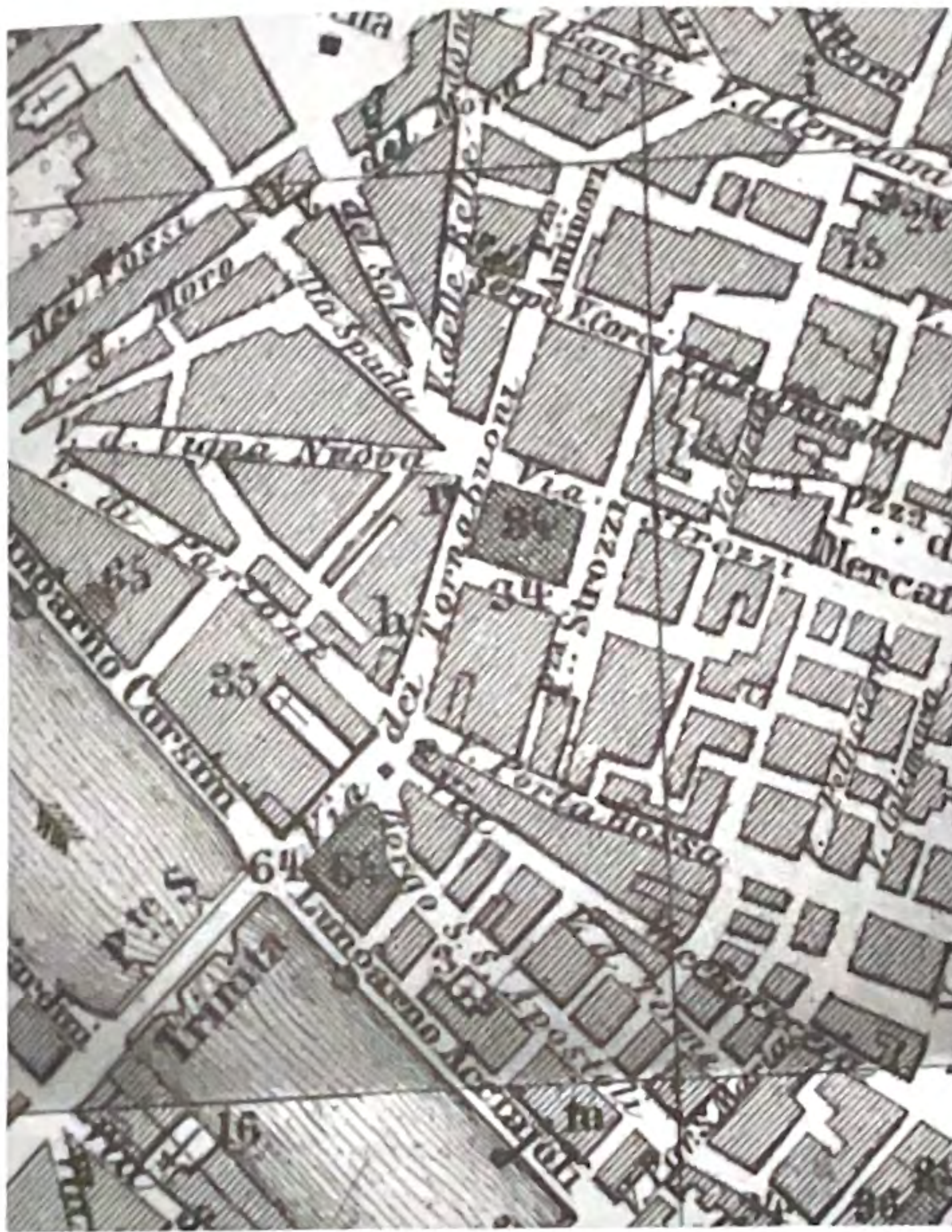
<sup>8</sup> Vernon, *In and out*, p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Richard Weld, *The New Capital of Florence*, (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1867), pp. 24-25.

<sup>10</sup> Augustus Hare, *Cities of Central Italy*, (London: George Allen, 1891), vol. 1, p. 87.

<sup>11</sup> J. W. De Forest, *European Acquaintance: Being Sketches of People in Europe*, (New York: Harper and Brothers 1858), p. 200. See also Giuliana Artom Treves, *The Golden Ring: The Anglo-Florentines 1847-1862* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1956), pp. 10-12.





**Map of Via Tornabuoni area, Florence, 1870** (Photo: Athanasiou Geolas)

**Via Tornabuoni, 1955** (Photo: Foto Locchi 1955\_37832)

The Caffé Doney was located in what was commonly called the *salotto d'Europa* or the salon of Europe. It was at the heart of Anglo activity in Florence and considered by many foreigners to be the heart of the city — a fact underscored by an 1806 panoramic view of Florence taken from the top of the Palazzo Spini Feroni located at the base of the via Tornabuoni. Across the street from the Caffé Doney was the Seeber bookstore (Libreria Internazionale Messagerie), founded in 1864 by the Loescher family and well known as the best purveyor of foreign guidebooks. Nearby was the Caffé Giacosa, established in 1815, the *Pro-fumeria Inglese*, founded by an English chemist in 1843, and the British Institute and lending library, launched in 1917. The latter was established in the then enclosed loggia of the Palazzo Rucellai until it moved in 1923 to the Palazzo Antinori on via Tornabuoni — a few buildings away from Caffé Doney. Both the US and Great Britain had consulates on the street in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and Thomas Cook had a travel office. There were also several grand hotels; the Hotel de la Ville, Hotel du Nord (housed in the Palazzo Bartolini-Salimbeni), and the Hotel d'Europe. There was also a private reading room known as the Gabinetto Vieusseux (founded by Gian Pietro Vieusseux in 1819 and originally located in the Palazzo Buondelmonti). The Gabinetto was patronized by Stendhal, James Fenimore Cooper,



**Riccardo Nobili, la Birreria Cornelio, 1885, 66 x 142 cm, oil on canvas, collection of the Gallery of Modern Art at the Pitti Palace, Florence**  
(Photo: Alinari AGC-000095-0000)



**Adriano Cecioni, Caffè Michelangelo, 1861**  
(Photo: Wikimedia Commons)



## E

### Café Life

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century cafés typically closed by 11 pm. The café Bottegone (opened in 1869) in the piazza del Duomo was atypical as it stayed open until 2 am serving the popular new drink Vermouth, which had been invented in Turin. Most cafés served only drinks: coffee, chocolate, tea, wine, beer, and other alcohol. A few served pastries. Several served *bistecca* for breakfast and lunch. Some cafés advertised omelets and cold buffets. Many served gelati. Some, like the Birreria Cornelio (called a Birreria as it sold beer), served food in their outdoor garden. The Birreria Cornelio (destroyed by a fire in 1894), repeatedly recommended in the Baedeker and located near the Baptistery, also had music in the evenings.

opposite  
**Telemaco Signorini, Caricaturisti e Caricaturati al caffè Michelangelo (1848-1866), 1893, cover**



The Macchiaoli along with young art students studying painting at the Accademia, their teachers such as Giovanni Fattori and painters in town such as Serafino De Tivoli, Stefano Ussi or Diego Martelli hung out at the café Michelangiolo (1848-1866) on the via Larga. The café, decorated with the artists' paintings, was affectionately known as the café Macchiaoli. A member of the group, the painter Telemaco Signorini, illustrated *Caricaturisti e caricaturati al Caffè Michelangiolo* (1893).



Anglo Americans frequented the tea room of the café Doney, founded in 1827 on the via Tornabuoni, known for its gelato and considered to be the first café in the city. A new cocktail was

invented at the café Giacosa also on the via Tornabuoni. By 1846 the most elegant destination was considered to be the café Castelmur near Orsanmichele.

The 19<sup>th</sup>-century piazza Vittorio Emanuele II, conceived during the city's stint as Italy's capital but not inaugurated until 1890 (and renamed the piazza della Repubblica only after World War II), emerged as a center of café life. Once the piazza was created, this area was prime real estate and the cafés facing the piazza were known to be spacious and luxurious. An important café in this space was Gilli. In 1951 it was the site of Ruth Orkin's photograph of an American girl in Florence.

Next door to café Gilli was the café Paszkowski founded as a Birreria in 1846 at what was then the edge of the Ghetto. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century this is where Gabrielle d'Annunzio could be found when in Florence. By 1907 this is where Ardegno Soffici and Gaetano Salvemini hung out.

Across the piazza was le Giubbe Rosse. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century it was the meeting ground of the city's literati. In the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this included journalists involved in the important dissident journal *la Voce* (1908-1916) to which Roberto Longhi contributed. It was also where the Futurists met — serving as the site of editorial meetings of the short-lived





**Group assembled  
in front of the  
Caffè Giubbe  
Rosso, Florence,  
1939**

(Photo: Foto  
Locchi 1939 -  
L578-20bis)

Futurist newspaper *Lacerba* as well as *l'Italia futurista*. By the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the café was a favorite haunt of the fashion designer Emilio Pucci. Beginning in 1929 it is where the poet (and future Nobel Laureate) Eugenio Montale hung out when not busy directing the *Gabinetto Vieusseux*. Irma Brandeis a Jewish American scholar of Dante could also be found here along with fellow writers. Purportedly the inspiration of Clizia in Montale's poem *La Primavera Hitleriana*, Brandeis played an important role in the dissemination of Italian literature in the post-war United States. She published a book on Dante, edited another and taught at Bard. After WWII Le Giubbe Rosso was where Oriana Fallaci was entrenched.

By 1893 the café-concerto Gambrinus Hall was located in the piazza, boasting not only a billiard table but the biggest concert space in the city — accommodating 1,300.

In 1872 the Café Rivoire — recommended by Murray's Handbook — was opened in the Piazza Signoria. In 1870 the Café Fanti, renamed the Café San Marco, opened in the piazza of the same name. As Mónica Vázquez Astorga has shown, Florence was filled with cafes.



 **SOFFICI**

**FUTURIS**

**BIF5ZF+18**

simultaneità e

**IOR**

dal pispue tant a  
momenti rusa pedla  
F sulabm n  
tubal menba  
o pumavvst  
ntas y 0500  
atopch affat  
imallie  
cehi ap app smm  
atolow=halvi pise  
wraaa Rodadomsi  
imallifoneastuor  
uou aa uao vestit  
in muge j = sem  
glacat  
fa u fa  
manga

**Chimismi lirici**

Firenze Edizioni della "Voce,"



Mark Twain and Susan Horner among others recorded in the registers. The registers also recorded what books were borrowed and where library users were staying while in Florence. Membership passes could be purchased by the day, week, month or year. Between 1820-1825 there were 3,000 members, 70% of whom were English speaking. In 1870 the popular reading room was relocated to the Palazzo Strozzi with one of its principal entrances on the via Tornabuoni.

The Anglo American Agency was located nearby on the via Borgo Ognissanti. It was here that one could seek out a governess, Lady's maid, or doctor and even buy an English newspaper. Everything members of the English colony, the community of thousands of English and Americans living in Florence (which the British consul estimated to be 35,000 in 1910) needed was in the neighborhood. An editorial in an 1892 edition of the *Florentine Gazette* noted that "In the streets one hears little but the English language spoken"<sup>12</sup>.

If this were not enough, in the via Tornabuoni neighborhood there were a number of Italian specialty stores that were patronized by Anglo-Americans. By 1860 the photographer Giacomo Brogi had established a shop on the street (and then subsequently in Siena, Rome and Naples). Soon thereafter Fratelli Alinari, the world's oldest photographic firm, had a shop on the street. Alinari had one of their two stores located on the ground floor of the Palazzo Spini Feroni. It was at these shops that tourists could buy photographic albums and panoramic views of their favorite sites<sup>13</sup>. The Legatoria Cozzi on via Parione was where the American art historian Bernard Berenson had books bound for his library at the villa I Tatti. And by 1923 the Cartoleria Parione, on the corner of vias Parione and Tornabuoni, was where many visitors and residents had their bookplates made.

Tuscany in general, and Florence in particular was a popular and comfortable destination for foreigners throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Many visitors went for the season staying in one of the many popular hotels, renting out rooms or even an entire villa. The *Florence Gazette* published a weekly list of who was in town and where they were staying. It goes without saying that the city was one of the first destinations for Thomas Cook package tours. And yet, Florence was not unique. Other cities also boasted Anglo enclaves. Rome, Genova, Livorno all had specialty shops and services. Anglo Americans knew that they could find a good cup of tea at the Babbington Café adjacent to the Spanish Steps in Rome.

*opposite*  
**Libro dei Soci for  
the Gabinetto  
Scientifico-  
Letterario di  
G.P. Vieusseux,**  
April 16, 1867  
(Photo: Gabinetto  
Vieusseux)

<sup>12</sup> *Florentine Gazette*, May 3, 1892.

<sup>13</sup> By 1914, Alinari had a third shop, in addition to four other photo stores in the city.



Noi sottoscritti ci associamo al Gabinetto Scientifico-Letterario

1867

di G. P. VIEUSSEUX.

Avril	13	Le Prince N. de Lieven	Hôtel de la Ville	2 semaines paid
"	"	A. Wulff	Thorne Hotel de l'Europe	one week.
"	"	B. Jonsworth	Hotel de l'Europe	one week
"	14	Alti et son	Prussia	une semaine
"	"	W. H. Charlton	Hotel de l'Arno	3 weeks paid
"	"	V. M. Hornby	Hotel de l'Arno	2 weeks paid
"	15	Mrs Mitchell	H. 6 - Lung' Arno Nuovo	Library 1 week paid
"	15 <sup>a</sup>	Frank L. Warden	Casa Gendi Via Maggio	Library & Reading Room, 1 month
"	"	Rev. B. Palmer	Via Palestro - Couronne d'Italie	1 month paid
"	15 <sup>a</sup>	J. M. Miller	via Magenta	
"	"	Mr. Curie	Hotel del' Arno	3 weeks?
"	"	Angiam Antano	via S. Caterina 1873 B.	
"	16	Decio Bevilacqua	Lucca, anno 18 pagato	
"	16	Capt. H. H. Peel	one week.	
"	16	M. G. Buono	21 Boys 3/4 paid	
"	"	Reva B. Surera Muncay	Hotel Victoria	1 month paid
"	"	Miss Powys	Couronne d'Italie	1 week paid
"	"	Begna Domenico	Via Maggio 1874	1 week paid



While visitors sometimes succumbed to the famous Stendhal syndrome, a temporary mental or physical state of distress when presented with the sublime, it was the proverbial wealth of art, culture and history and not food that elicited strong reactions. When Nathaniel Hawthorne travelled through Tuscany in the 1850s, he found the food not worth mentioning. The wine was no better. The character Kenyon in his *Marble Faun* noted that he would rather drink cider in New England than Tuscan wine<sup>14</sup>. He even claimed the making of cider to be much more picturesque. Some 25 years after Hare's famous guidebook, Herbert Vaughan deemed a few more caf  s, restaurants and tearooms serviceable — but they were still locations “frequented by English people” and accustomed to serving things they liked<sup>15</sup>. With few exceptions, foreign travel writers shied away from discussing traditional Italian cuisine. So, where is Italian food as we know it?

Franco La Cecla reminds us that it was the cookbook author Pellegrino Artusi who nationalized tomato sauce in conjunction with the rise of durum wheat and hence pasta and in so doing became a hero of national unity<sup>16</sup>. The publication of Artusi's *La Scienza in cucina e L'Arte di mangiar bene* in 1891 marked a turning point in the history of Italian cuisine. Now a classic, reprinted almost yearly, it brought regional traditions together to create a national cuisine. Luigi Ballerini notes in his introduction to a 21<sup>st</sup>-century edition of the book, “Artusi showed how the preservation of diversity does not contradict collective interests”<sup>17</sup>. So while the regions of Tuscany, where the book was written, and Emilia-Romagna, where Artusi was born, emerge as gastronomically superior, there are recipes from throughout the country. And all contribute to the idea of an Italian cuisine. This was important for a country that had undergone unification in recent memory — in 1861. Prior to unification the peninsula was made up of different regions with distinct culture and food. There was nothing ostensibly Italian, as there was no Italy. So in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century creating a shared Italian culture was a major project. As Giuseppe Garibaldi, the general responsible for Italian unification, said “It will be spaghetti, I swear to you, that unifies Italy”<sup>18</sup>. And he was right. Prior to Italian unification there was not even a preferred dialect. There was no agreed upon way to speak Italian. Regional differences were so extreme that Venetians would have found it difficult, if not impossible, to understand a Sicilian. Artusi even had to provide a short dictionary in the 1926 edi-

<sup>14</sup> Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun, or, The Romance of Monte Beni* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 170.

<sup>15</sup> Herbert Vaughan, *Florence and Her Treasures*, (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1911), p. 368.

<sup>16</sup> Franco La Cecla, *Pasta and Pizza* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2007), 19.

<sup>17</sup> Artusi, *Science*, p. xxi.

<sup>18</sup> Artusi, *Science*, p. xiii.



tion of his book that explained the meaning of some commonly used Tuscan words like *vas-soio* (glass), *scaloppini* (thin slices of cooked meat), and *cotoletta* (cutlet).

The creation of an Italian cuisine would have been novel for any Italian living in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The average person would have never heard of gnocchi made from anything but oatmeal or polenta, used a tomato, or known what to do with a potato. Artusi changed all that. For a country long dominated by foreign powers and used to looking towards France for cultural leadership when it came to food, the idea of eating Italian dishes at important events would have been revolutionary. Surviving menus from formal occasions throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and into the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries underscore that the preferred food in Italy was still French cuisine. The menu for a wedding banquet held in 1893 at Milan's Ristorante Meridiana for example included ostrich, consommé and glaces Chantilly. Even the food and drink at more pedestrian venues was French. As the British cookbook writer Elizabeth David observed, well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many thought that only the French could cook.

After Unification it was necessary for Italy to present itself to the world. The country, in which poverty and hunger were endemic, now had to create an image of a modern nation. Food was central to this process and has remained so. Artusi initiated a gastronomic reorientation that was enhanced by new products, foodstuffs and traditions. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century foreign influences were increasingly being supplanted by home grown Italian recipes. During the Fascist era this process became even more pronounced. By the time of the regime's invasion into East Africa and the imposition of an embargo against the importation of foreign goods, the general public was taught that anything native was superior.

In reality, recipes for dishes like *carciofi alla giudia* and *ravioli alla Genovese* (made with lamb and chicken) were of no use to most Italians of Artusi's era. Poverty, malnutrition, and disease were national scandals and caused mass migration. As Susan Horner noted in 1861, it was virtually impossible not to encounter a beggar when out on a jaunt<sup>19</sup>. Hawthorne's character Kenyon describes countless children "crying, whining, and bellowing at once for alms"<sup>20</sup>. Hawthorne's account of his own journey through Italy in the late 1850s is saturated with beggars. As too is that of John Ruskin, who notes people repeatedly dropping to their knees with their hands outstretched. It is clear that people were desperate. Even Pinocchio starved for most of Collodi's novel.

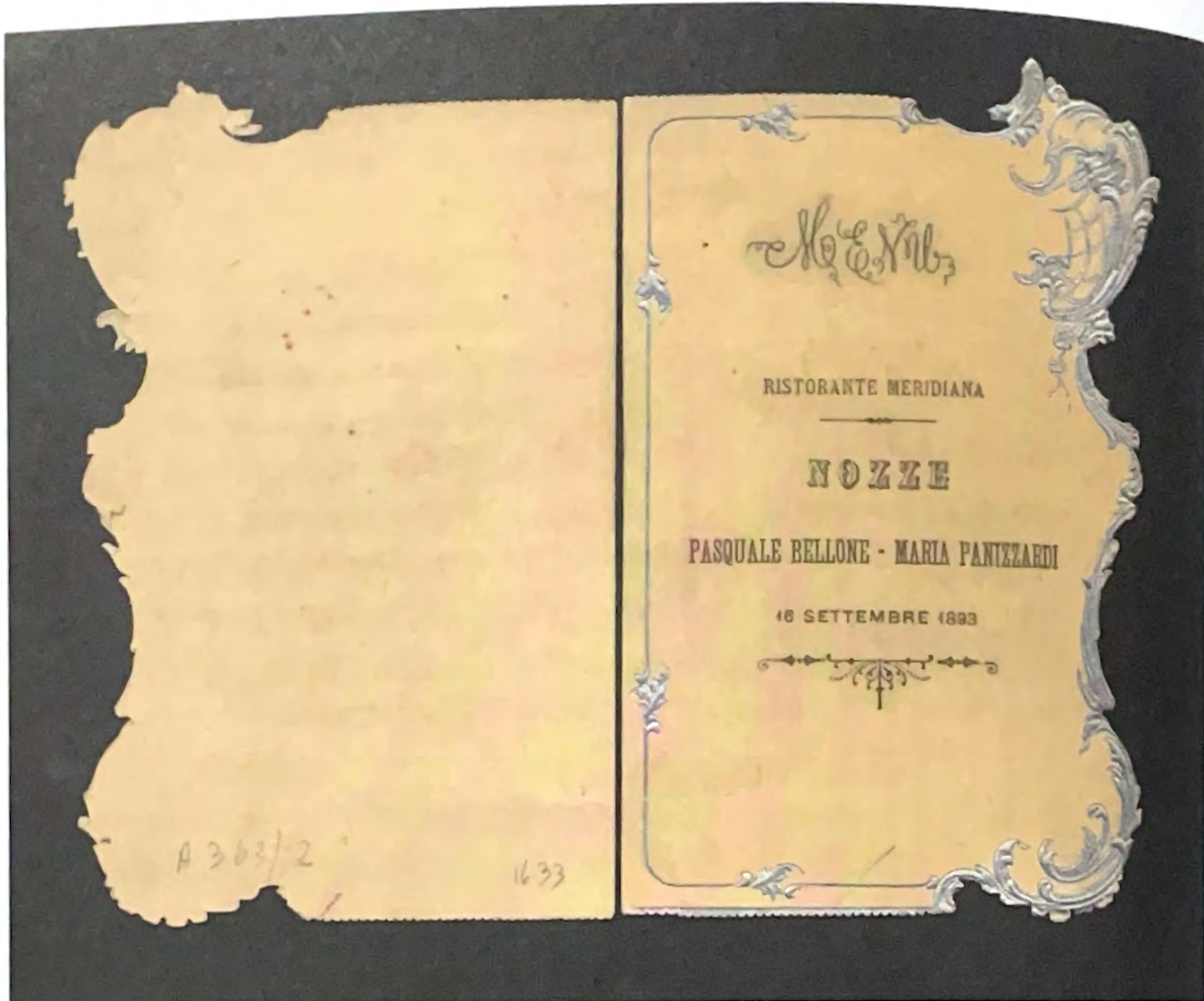
The greater population of Italy was desperately poor and hungry throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It has been suggested that the history of Italian cuisine should real-

<sup>19</sup> Horner, diary, December, 1861, p. 1.

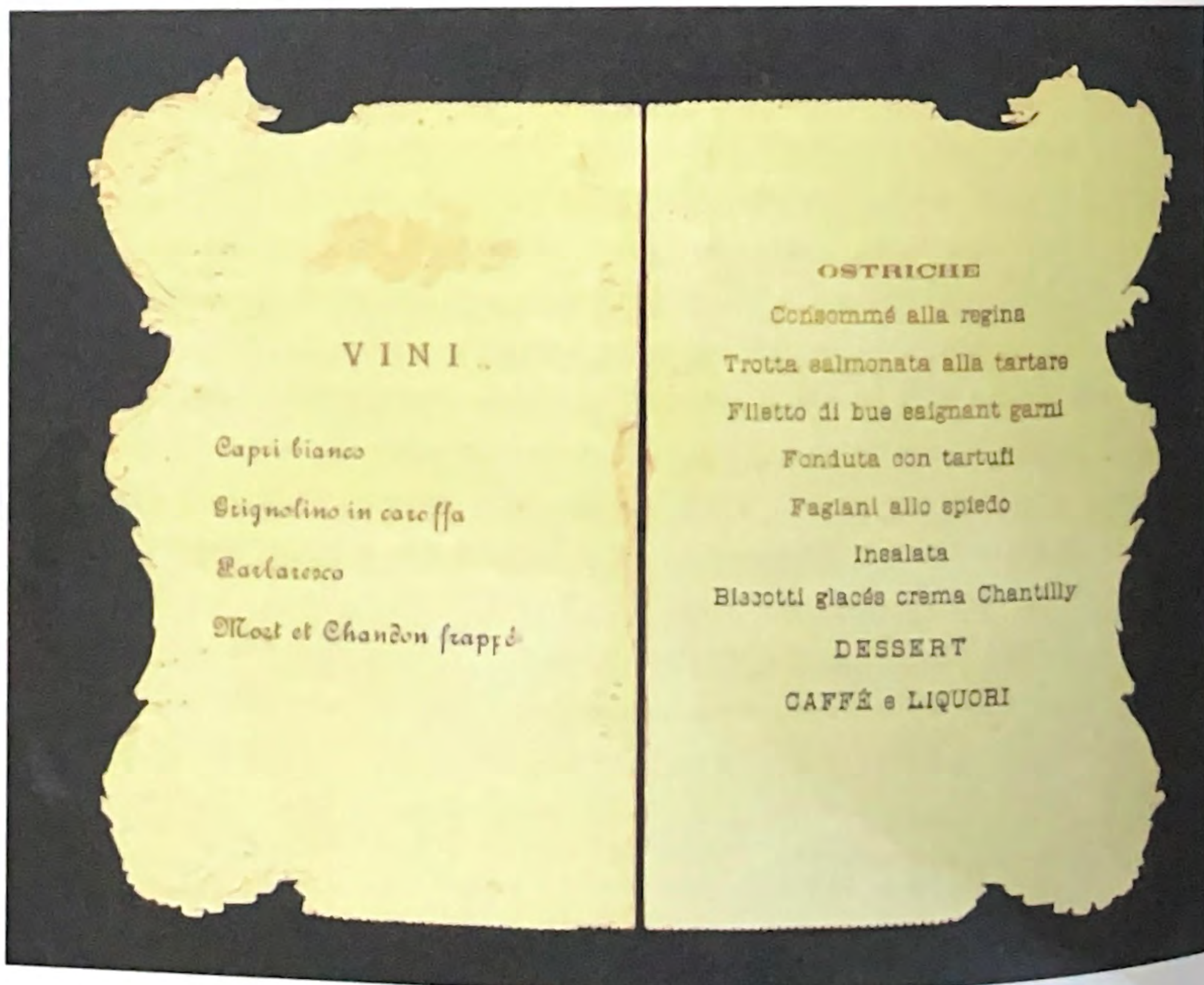
<sup>20</sup> Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun*, p. 191.



Lunch Menu from  
the Ristorante  
Meridiana,  
Milan,  
September 16,  
1893  
(Photo:  
Accademia  
Barilla)



Lunch Menu from  
the Ristorante  
Meridiana,  
Milan,  
September 16,  
1893, back  
(Photo:  
Accademia  
Barilla)





ly be the history of hunger<sup>21</sup>. Logically people left in droves. Between 1876 and 1901 almost two million Italians left Italy for places in South America and the United States in the hopes of making a new life in the land of plenty. Another 1.7 million people left Italy between 1902 and 1925. 400,000 left between 1926 and 1939. Campaigns of oversized foodstuffs, popularized in so-called “exaggeration postcards” (printed by several Midwestern companies during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) sent home to Italy only heightened expectations about fertile soils outside Italy<sup>22</sup>.

Within this context good food, let alone trying out new recipes, was simply not possible for most people. The vast majority of Italians were too busy living off of polenta. The typical day of the sharecropping peasant in the Province of Florence prior to WWII began with a bowl of polenta (typically advanced from the night before) or panzanella (stale bread soaked in water and mixed with vegetables). Seasonally this might have been substituted with rice or chestnuts. On rare occasions the peasant would eat a kind of corn flour fritter. While milk was commonly obtained, olive oil was costly and harder to come by. Butter was extremely rare. And neither butter nor olive oil was used to cook. Instead they were used sparingly as condiments for beans or pasta. Sugar and coffee were considered luxuries. Pasta and bread were made from corn flour. Tortellini stuffed with potatoes and meat were reserved for holidays. Lunch consisted of a single course — bean soup or polenta. *Pappa* was common as it was made with a few inexpensive ingredients (stale bread, tomatoes or other vegetables, and basil). Dinner was similar to lunch except that there might be eggs, cheese and some fresh fruit. Potatoes were rare. Only some families would eat chicken, rabbit or fish at some point during the week — typically because someone in the family had time to hunt or fish on the farmhouse property. Keep in mind that the *fattoria* or estate woods and streams were off limits to the *mezzadri* or sharecroppers. Wealthier families could sometimes afford to buy meat or even pasta at a store in the neighboring town. And if they did, they bought cheaper types of meat; tripe, lungs, cod or herring. Salt was typically obtained by bartering eggs at market. Spices and herbs (with the exception of basil) do not appear to have been used in spite of the fact that Artusi indicates that they were common in Tuscan cuisine. Most peasants drank from communal glasses placed in the center of the table. Fruit was only eaten off of a tree — never displayed in a bowl on the table. Bread and wine were usually in abundance, but not much more. All in all, the peasant palette was fairly dull. There was little variety and few-

<sup>21</sup> Carol Helstosky, “Recipe for the Nation: Reading Italian History Through *La Scienza in Cucina* and *La Cucina Futurista*”, in *Food and Foodways: Explorations in the History and Culture of Human Nourishment*, 11:113-140, 2003, p. 114.

<sup>22</sup> This world of desperation, poverty and starvation is encapsulated in the relatively new Museum of Italian Emigration in Rome — inaugurated to celebrate 150 years of Italian emigration.



Telemaco  
Signorini, *The  
Ward of the  
Madwomen at  
St. Bonifazio in  
Florence, 1865*,  
collection of  
the Gallery of  
Modern Art in Cà  
Pesaro, Venice  
(Photo: Alinari  
DEA-S-001040-  
0158)



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### **Pellagra is the Dirth of the Poor**

By the 19<sup>th</sup> century the agricultural landscape of Tuscany was heavily dominated by maize. This had a profound impact on the peasant diet. Dairy products and meat were rare while corn and its products like polenta were predominant. As Emanuela Scarpellini reminds us, peasant diets were low in calorie count, scarce of vitamins and protein. Most peasants suffered a nutritional deficiency of niacin. Many suffered the consequence of *pellagra* — a disease known as the poor man's scourge.

Pellagra was disfiguring and debilitating. It began with a severe form of dermatitis, included diarrhea, bloody gums and the loss of teeth, and resulted in dementia and death.



Victims suffered fatigue and anxiety at best, hallucinations and homicidal tendencies at worst. Peasants in Northern and North-Central Italy — where single-crop farming and single-food diets were predominant — were more severely affected than those in the South, where there was more crop variety. Women were more severely affected than men, largely as they were more malnourished — often eating after the head of household and children as well as eating less. And yet while pregnant and breast feeding, women were in need of greater nutrition. Constantly pregnant during their child-bearing years, women were always in need of a varied and robust diet — something they did not have.

Several agricultural surveys were conducted between 1879 and 1900 by the government in an attempt to understand the “sickness of the poor”. And there were hospital wards devoted to its containment. The physician and anthropologist Cesare Lombroso, who became famous for studying physiognomies, noted that more and better food was the cure — something poor peasants did not have access to.

By 1900 farm mechanization and crop diversity spread. So too did the amount of land devoted to pasture, thereby increasing the number of livestock reared for meat and dairy products. This, coupled with the introduction of the concept of the vitamin, enhanced nutrition.

In 1902 the government passed the “Law against pellagra” requiring crop diversity, rabbit breeding, the distribution of salt to the poor, and requiring children with pellagra to eat in school canteens. All of this was done with the hope of making the peasant diet more varied than corn.

By May 1927 Mussolini declared the pellagra problem resolved. And yet ironically the peasant diet was not much improved during the regime.





**Oversize Raspberries,** postcard produced by **Edward Mitchell,** San Francisco, 1910 (Photo: collection of the Author)

opposite  
**Luciano Artusi,**  
cover of the 1920  
edition of *La  
Scienza in Cucina*  
(Photo: [www.gustoblog.it](http://www.gustoblog.it))

er calories. Farm families ate what the farm produced, and not more. To confound matters the *massaia* or housewife often ate alone, in the kitchen, after the family had eaten<sup>23</sup>. Since at least the 16<sup>th</sup> century there has been an established tradition in Italy of class associations with food<sup>24</sup>. Children conceived under the influence of onions were thought to be prone to vice. Chestnuts, notoriously hard to digest, were left to peasants to eat. As far back as the 16<sup>th</sup>-century genre paintings of Campi, Passarotti and Carracci, in which peasants were surrounded by an abundance of food, stereotypes regarding peasants and food were set up. Peasants were unkempt, uncouth, boisterous and well fed. Food was understood to engender the body. This could not have been further from reality. The food that surrounded peasants in the paintings — the varieties of poultry, fish, and meat, the abundance of fruit, vegetables, and cheese — was not peasant food.

As late as the 1930s most Italians were simply trying to stymie hunger. The 475 recipes of Artusi's book, expanded to 790 recipes in the 13<sup>th</sup> edition published in 1909, began a discussion of how to eat Italian food — but only amongst those who could afford to eat. And peasants were not eating. According to government surveys only 76% of the country's resi-

<sup>23</sup> For a discussion of what was eaten by Tuscan sharecroppers see Francesco Aperi and Carla Bianco, *La ne-  
ca cena. Famiglia mezzadrile e pratiche alimentare a Vicchio di Mugello* (Firenze: Centro Editoriale Toscano,  
1991).

<sup>24</sup> Sheila McTighe, 'Foods and the Body in Italian Genre Paintings, about 1580: Campi, Passarotti, Carracci' *The  
Art Bulletin* 86 (2004) 301-323.





IGIENE - ECONOMIA - BUON GUSTO

## LA SCIENZA IN CUCINA E L'ARTE DI MANGIAR BENE

MANUALE PRATICO PER LE FAMIGLIE

COMPIUTO DA

PELLEGRINO ARTUSI

Un pasto buono ed un menzuro  
Mantengono l'uomo sano.  
Piglia il cibo con misura  
Dal due regni di natura.

Molto olio e mal digesto  
Non fa il corpo sano e lieto.  
Frena il gusto di in ore.

Tercia edizione corretta ed ampliata.



FIRENZE  
ADRIANO SALANI, EDITORE

dents had electricity, 66% had running water and a mere 12% had bathrooms. Only a handful had a refrigerator<sup>25</sup>. Even the “modern” houses in the Pontine new towns had no running water. The ability to produce delectable food in the Italian kitchen was simply neither a reality nor a priority. By the time the government commissioned a survey on poverty in 1951, the statistics were not much better. Indeed, most ordinary Italians did not eat decently until well after World War II — a fact, which while shocking was not much different than other places in the Western World including the Southern United States, France, or Russia. Consequently the 19<sup>th</sup>-century audience for Artusi’s book was primarily the bourgeoisie, who preferred to have servants do the cooking — including Artusi himself, who apparently never cooked a meal. While Artusi was the first cookbook accessible to people who could read Italian, there were many who could neither read, nor afford, to cook. Scholarship has promoted Artusi’s cookbook as the first for Italians, but in reality when it was published it was only for some Italians.

<sup>25</sup> Carol Helstosky, *Garlic and Oil. Food and Politics in Italy*, (Oxford: Berg, 2004), p. 81.



This is confirmed by the fact that many recipes in the 1926 edition call for salt and butter. It was even suggested that one should drink good coffee at lunch. In 1935 Artusi reminds readers that meat is the foundation of every meal and that lemon gelato should be used as a palette cleanser. Salt, butter, coffee and meat were things that would have been hard to come by for most Italians. Palette cleansers would have been unheard of for peasants. There is no doubt that Artusi was aiming at middle and upper class readers.

So if there was not much to eat in Italy, and certainly nothing good, then where and when does the Anglo-American fondness for Italian food develop? Perhaps surprisingly this is a phenomenon of the last half-century. Remember, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Italian immigrants crowded into city slums in the U.S., they and their food were pilloried. Pasta, pizza, garlic and olive oil were the smelly food of the poor and ignorant. Italian restaurants were unheard of. And if they had been, they certainly never would have been considered fine dining.

It took decades before pasta and pizza became the desirable foods they are today. The desirability of Italian food in England is indebted to the influential cookbook writing of Elizabeth David who wrote prosaically about simple, inexpensive and flavorful Italian cooking in 1954 in her groundbreaking book *Italian Food*. The book was written at a time when the British population maintained a strong memory of starvation during World War II, had just ended a 15-year period of rationing, and when it was still difficult to locate parmesan cheese or olive oil in London. The US in turn owes a large debt to Marcella Hazan, whose influential 1973 *Classic Italian Cook Book* revolutionized American attitudes towards Italian cooking and launched the craze for balsamic vinegar.

The endless stream of cookbooks, food memoirs, and gastronomic guides — from Elizabeth David to the popular writer Frances Mayes — are products of a revolution. Remember, no one even heard of *tiramisù* before the 1960s, or even drank much Italian wine. The olive oil, wine and *papardelle al ragù* we now love to consume constitute a gastronomic topography that would not have been familiar to most Italians of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today figures such as Mayes or Lorenza de Medici, the founding director of the internationally famous cooking school the Villa Table at the Badia a Coltibuono in Chianti and author of cookbooks with titles like *The Renaissance of Italian Cooking*, have made careers out of encouraging gastronomic pleasure. Mario Batali, the Barefoot Contessa and the wild success of Eataly now constitute a multi-million dollar industry centered around Italian food. But this is all novel. Michele Scicolone has noted, "If Artusi were alive today, he would surely be the star of a popular [cooking] show on television".

opposite  
Making pizza,  
Florence  
(Photo: Cosimo  
Lipparini)

<sup>26</sup> Artusi, *Science*, p xii.





Not only has Italian food become desirable it has become a catalyst for self-exploration. Anthony Capella captures this status of food in his romantic comedy *The Food of Love* in which a twenty-something American girl falls in love with the art, beauty, men, and of course food, of Italy during her first trip. A man named Tomasso tells Laura that he's a chef at a famous restaurant and starts to woo her with spectacular dishes he pretends to cook. In reality he is only a waiter.

As the romance unfolds among the *primi* and *secondi piatti*, the American embarks on a process of self-discovery punctuated by comic observations of Italian daily life. The way food is prepared and eaten is central to the plot, at the core of character development, and essential to understanding the country that has won the heart of the young foreigner. Recipes invite readers to share her experience.

A gastro-geography emerges that is distinctly Italian. This phenomenon is reinforced in Elizabeth Gilbert's 2006 bestselling book *Eat Pray Love. One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India, and Indonesia*, in which the author travels abroad as a process of rediscovery. In Italy she uses food as a way to reconnect with her authentic feelings. In the 2010 movie starring Julia Roberts and based on the book, the author's character is seen travelling down the winding cypress-tree lined road on the Origo estate in southern Tuscany, firmly interweaving the celebration of food with the Italian landscape.



A plate of farro  
pictured against  
the backdrop of  
Isola Santo in  
the Garfagnano  
(Photo: Brian  
Leatart for Bon  
Appetit, May  
2000)



**THE DISH:** Farro Salad with Peas, Favas, Arugula and Tomatoes

**THE PLACE:** Overlooking the village of Isola Santa in the Garfagnano, a mountainous area in the northwest. The main city, Castelnuovo di Garfagnano, shown opposite.

Carol Helstosky has succinctly noted in her cultural history of Italian food that beginning in the 1980s the American restaurant, cookbook, and tourist industries “reinvented a tradition of Italian cooking for non-Italian consumers”<sup>27</sup>. Carol Field’s succulent cookbooks

<sup>27</sup> Helstosky, *Garlic and Oil*, p. 155.



constitute a few among a large genre. Today it would be unfathomable for tourist advice to Tuscany to exclude food. As a recent feature article in the *New York Times* noted, “meals are important in Florence”<sup>28</sup>. If this process began in the ‘80s, it certainly flourished in the ‘90s and has reached hitherto un-seen proportions in the last two decades.

Of course, the popular press has made a major contribution to this endeavor. In 2000 *Bon Appétit* published a special theme issue dedicated to Tuscany. Twenty-five “traditional” dishes, some of which became familiar only after Artusi, were photographed in some of the region’s most scenic spots (typically late Medieval and Renaissance): *Farro* at Garfagnano, *ribollita* against the backdrop of Siena’s campo, grilled steak with arugula and parmesan in front of the Cortona panorama and a fruit tart against the backdrop of the Leaning Tower<sup>29</sup>. As the magazine’s editors noted,

This is the Italy of our dreams — the magical region we have read about, seen in paintings and fantasized about, the medieval villages, walled towns and Renaissance cities. It is the land of Florence, Siena and Lucca, of the Uffizi and the Leaning Tower of Pisa and more Duomos than we can count. It is the home of Dante, Galileo, Machiavelli, Leonardo, Michelangelo.

*Bon Appétit*’s Tuscany is a familiar, beguiling place, made more so by the nostalgic prose of Mayes and the homey recipes of Lorenza de’Medici — experts who have made successful careers capitalizing on the appeal of the region. Included are testimonials that legitimize the authenticity of their project. Mayes quotes Mama Rita, her neighbor Lucio, a pasta maker named Dino, and a gardener named Giotto as if to underscore the authority of her voice through its proximity to the native informant. The text seeks to convince readers of the existence “of a magical region” where Michelangelo and Dante are simply ingredients in the soup. As is well evidenced by the genre of literature written by Mayes and others, Tuscany’s identity emerges as being rooted both in its food and landscape. While this seems a natural fit, it is worth remembering that this image of Tuscany is, as always, a cultural construction — in this case of the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We need only recall the acerbic comments of travelers such as Mark Twain to realize the extent to which the image of Tuscany with which we are so familiar today has been carefully crafted, maintained, promoted and even protected. More than a century after the early guidebooks of Murray and Hare, food has achieved a stature equivalent to Renaissance art and architecture — recipes, domestic makeovers, romance and fine art mix in this genre of Italophilia. That this all seems natural is part of the story as hyped since the 1980s. Italy and in particular Tuscany has become a brand that signifies good food. This Tuscan brand is so powerful that even the Purina company has recognized that cat

<sup>28</sup> Adam Begley, “Florence, Then and Now”, *The New York Times*, November 30, 2008, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> “The Tuscan Table” *Bon Appétit*, May 2000, p. 115.





**White Chicken Tuscany, Fancy Feast cat food**  
(Photo: collection of the Author)

owners are more likely to spring for gourmet cat food if packaged as Tuscan. The line of food known as “Tuscan Medleys” is produced under the Fancy Feast line and purportedly provides a “modern take on Tuscan traditions”. The cans of White Chicken Tuscany are even emblazoned with an “exquisite taste” seal. Recently Purina developed a Florentine line that is “inspired by classic Italian tastes”.

We must remember that desires are culturally constructed before they are consumed. The gastro porn industry of Tuscany is highly developed — sustained by local industry and foreign scholars alike, countless blogs, and cookbooks. It is consumable in the city as well as the *campo*.

**opposite**  
**Val D'Orcia landscape** (Photo: Fototeca ENIT)

Among the farms that actively produce food in Tuscany itself, many capitalize on the desires of tourists who seek, even if briefly, a coexistence with agricultural production in the form of agritourism. Visitors desire the façade of authenticity — good local food, stunningly un-marred views of the Tuscan hills, supported by an invisible modern infrastructure — air conditioning, indoor plumbing, and enough water to fill a swimming pool. Even Andrea Bocelli, the blind tenor, has sung deliriously about the land beneath his Tuscan sky, most famously on his *Cieli Toscani* CD.

Iris Origo, whom we know as the author of *The Merchant of Prato*, purchased a complex of farms which she called *La Foce*, in the southernmost part of Tuscany. Since the mid-1990s it has been converted into a popular agritourist destination that has recently been featured on more than one occasion in the *New York Times* travel section. The estate's former farmhouses and outbuildings can now be rented. The central *fattoria* villa provides a venue for weddings, concerts and conferences. Guests can enjoy meals cooked with seasonal products and views across a seemingly unspoiled landscape.

And yet, this landscape is far from natural. It has been carefully edited. Since the time of the Romantics a particular visual logic has been applied to the Tuscan hills. They gently roll, are crowned with cypress trees, and are dotted by seemingly bucolic farmhouses. Vera Zamagni has argued in her economic history of Italy that “there is no part of the Italian landscape [...that] has escaped man's efforts to manipulate it”. Italy has been “con-





tinuously subject to human intervention”<sup>30</sup>. We know that all flatland in Tuscany was malarial and therefore subject to reclamation efforts, but it should be noted that the bucolic rolling hills have also been the subject of intervention.

While this landscape was long the playground of the aristocracy, during Fascism it was exploited as being the humble terrain of the people — a place where the food, fashion, and architecture were somehow more honest and in touch with the terrain. While the pernicious rhetoric of the totalitarian regime has long since been banished, the legacy of the landscape remains. Tuscany continues to be presented as a retreat from a fast-paced life. It is the place where one can get in touch with one’s senses and slow down. Countless blogs, recipes, memoirs and movies remind us of this. Recently Starbucks produced a series of coffee mugs termed “postcards from Italy” complete with sayings about how life could be in Tuscany. The Italian journalist Beppe Severgnini notes that “we too often agree to adapt Italy’s image to the fantasies of our guests”<sup>31</sup>. The Tuscan landscape is surely no exception.

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<sup>30</sup> Vera Zamagni, *The economic history of Italy, 1860-1990: from the periphery to the centre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 47.

<sup>31</sup> Beppe Severgnini, *Italians: Il giro del mondo in 80 pizze* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2008), p. 89.





Young women wear paglia hats, c. 1955 (Photo: Alinari LLA-f-00R48-0000)

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### Paglia Production

Since 1718 Signa, twelve kilometers west of Florence, was the center of woven *paglia* production — a major part of the Tuscan economy. By 1911 there were 104 hat weaving factories — each boasting anywhere from 30 to 180 workers. According to the census, 731 of the 757 women living in the village of Signa were employed in *paglia* production. Until the mid-1920s, 5,000 people in Signa were employed in the *paglia* factories. Countless more worked in the countryside harvesting and plaiting the straw. According to the 1854 John Murray *Handbook*, women (and this was a predominantly female enterprise) could purchase straw, plait it, and make as much as 20 pence a day. Already by 1859, more than 100,000 Tuscans were employed in the industry. So many worked in the industry that some 40,000 went on strike in 1896 to protest their diminishing wages. *Paglia*, or straw produced from a variety of wheat known as Marzuolo, was harvested, bleached, braided and sewn into hats for both women and men. As many as 13 lengths of straw were woven together. The fashionable straw hats were shipped from Livorno to countries throughout the world and were commonly known as Leghorn for the town of export.

opposite  
Jacopo Chimenti  
da Empoli, *Still  
Life*, 17<sup>th</sup> century,  
showing a fiasco  
(Photo:  
wikimedia,  
public domain)



During the seasons that hats were not needed, the woven straw industry produced containers and other objects. In nearby Fiesole a mechanized system of producing straw lace was developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Although straw hats were made in Tuscany since the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, they were made from straw that was used for various uses. It was not until the early 1700s that grain was grown for something other than food — namely for hats. In this case the straw could be more easily bleached.

Work was largely done by sharecroppers and was highly gendered. Women were by-and-large the *trecciaioli* or weavers. Many learned the skill as children. Although some as young as 6 years old were employed in the industry, the vast majority of weavers (75%) were at least 12 years of age.

In 1841 when a new train line was laid from Livorno to Florence a stop was created in Signa so that woven straw products could be more easily brought to Livorno for export.

Straw hats worn by workers in the field were simple. Hats for city dwellers were in turn fancy — often finished with ribbons, lace and flowers.

Near Signa, the Tuscan town of Empoli became known for a related industry — that of weaving protective straw baskets on the bottom of wine bottles. These so-called *fiaschi* were the preferred containers for Tuscan Chianti. By some accounts as many as 30,000 people were employed in the basket weaving industry by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1933 a manufacturer's association was created in Empoli. Today most *fiaschi*, with the exception of those for tourists, are made of plastic.





There is nothing historically easy or natural about this view shed. It was carefully crafted and colonized, typically by foreigners such as Iris Origo, who sought to perfect it. Tenant farmers and *braccianti* (day or seasonal laborers) worked the land — silently shaping it. Such agricultural workers typically had few rights, virtually no voice, lived in squalid conditions and were almost always hungry. Life amongst the predominantly female *braccianti* was particularly cruel. Women often intentionally miscarried in the fields — plowing their unborn fetuses under the soil<sup>32</sup>.

Giuseppe De Santis' 1949 film *Riso Amaro* (shot in the rice paddies of Vercelli) reminds us of the back-breaking work required of agricultural workers. As the workers sing — melodically venting their frustrations — we are reminded that the population of landless agricultural workers are ironically silent. Largely illiterate, the sharecroppers and *braccianti* left little record of their plight. They were silent and in turn have been silenced by the scholars who, for decades, have chosen to study the villas situated in these landscapes instead of small and often anonymous farm structures and workers who inhabited them. A notable exception is the push to ethnographic documentation published by the Centro Editoriale Toscano.

During the Fascist period push to populism, the countryside provided the rhetoric for constructing a native modernism. As such Tuscan farmhouses provided an alternative reading to the top-down modernism of le Corbusier and others. During a period of heightened self-sufficiency this was of course politically expedient. But the celebration of the rural also fit within 19<sup>th</sup>-century Romantic notions of local folkloric culture. In other words, the interest in the rural is a long-standing one, which while in existence for at least 200 years, has changed in terms of political tenor.

We all know that Tuscany has changed since the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Anglo-Americans bemoaned the bad food. Today *porchetta*, gelato, and Raphael are on the same menu. And yet ironically, just as people seek adventures in Tuscany BECAUSE of the food, the agricultural landscape is under threat.

Local/regional/and even national government has gone to great lengths to protect and preserve the Tuscan landscape. Tuscany is not simply a foreign construction of corporate enclaves such as the Olive Garden. They feed the frenzy, no doubt. But there is also significant government collusion. Let's remember, Tuscany has been allowed to have twice as many beds in their agritourist sites than any other region — ensuring that many more people enjoy the view sheds of cypress-crested hills.

<sup>32</sup> Diana Garvin, *Feeding Fascism: Tabletop Politics in Italy, 1922-1945*, PhD Dissertation, Cornell University, 2016.



Furthermore, there is the food — the town of Lucca has legally guaranteed that kebobs won't be eaten in the historic center. And according to their charter, "Slow towns", a movement begun in Greve in Chianti, have fought to ensure that no one can shop during siesta or have easy access to non-traditional Italian foods. We all know that Tuscan towns have been the struggling to preserve their Italic character. In Prato this has become particularly pronounced as the via Pistoiese has begun to look more Chinese than Italian due to the influx of Chinese textile workers who work in some 3,200 businesses channeling an estimated 1.5 million dollars a day in income to China<sup>33</sup>. While there is concern amongst Italians that the Chinese are beginning to dominate the MADE-IN-ITALY label, there is also real concern that Chinese immigrants, with their differing food culture, are beginning to ruin the ravioli. This fear of cultural contamination has its roots in Fascist period racist rhetoric spawned by a need to become more self-sufficient. Italians were trained, since unification, to harbor a distaste for the foreign. This became particularly pronounced during the *ventennio*, or 22 years of Fascist rule from 1922-1944, and in many ways has remained.

In all of this, a variety of Italian organizations have done what they can to ensure that the Tuscan landscape remains unchanged. If it were not for the Web site *Doxyspotting*, in which images are snagged from Google street views, we might not see that many Tuscan side roads in the deceptively bucolic landscape are actually populated by prostitutes plying their trade. While this might not constitute the idealized image of the Tuscany where we love to eat, it does represent a landscape whose cultural construction is complicated and multi-layered.

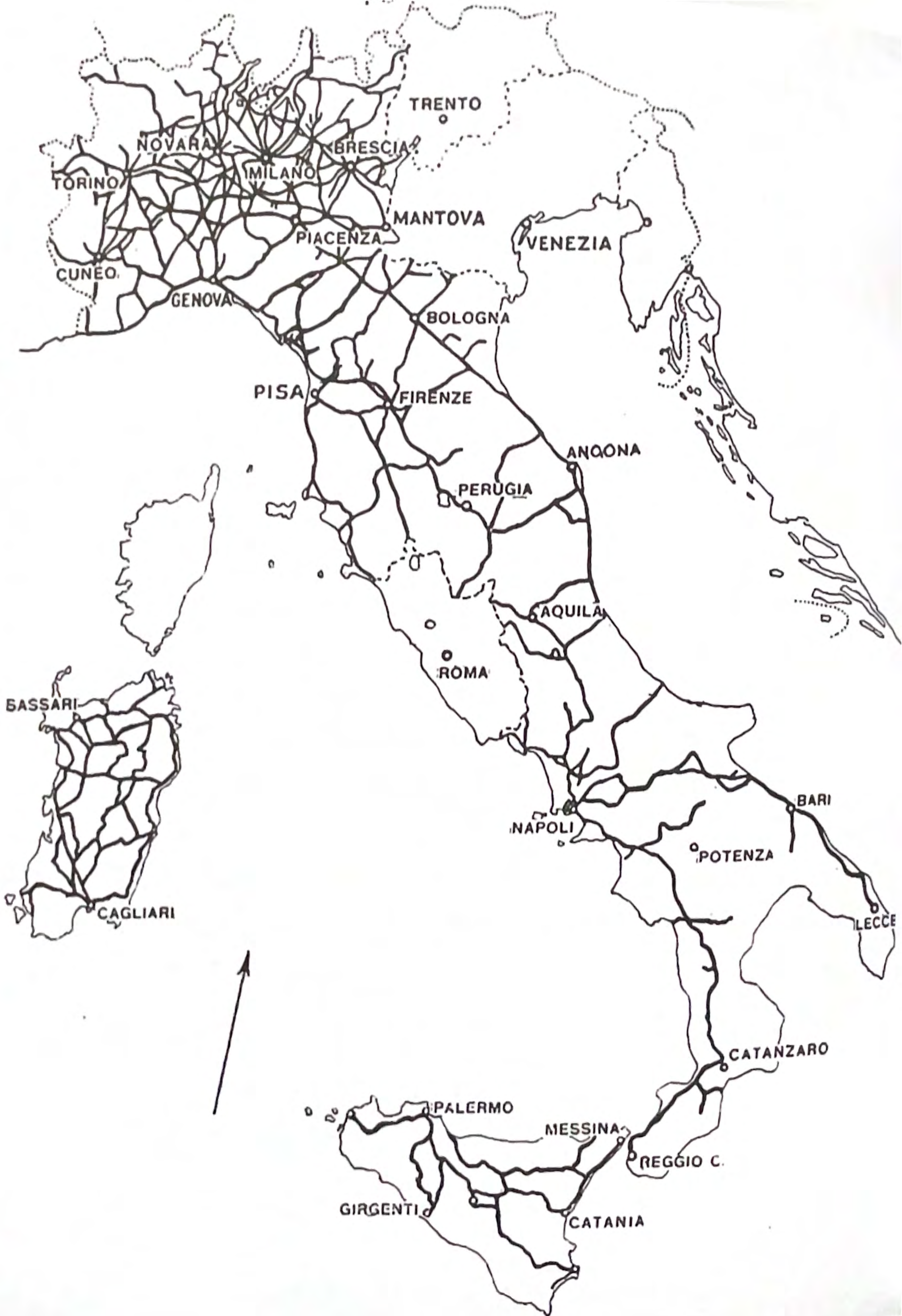
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<sup>33</sup> Rachel Donadio, "Chinese Remake the 'Made in Italy' Fashion Label", *New York Times*, September 12, 2010.



# Defining the Land







Italian  
automobile  
routes,  
from *Le Vie*  
*d'Italia*,  
April, 1927

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Train travel in Tuscany was largely engineered by the English. There was a long list of British engineers who oversaw the construction of Tuscan tracks including the first line which travelled from Livorno to Pisa. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century this line extended to the now defunct Porta al Prato station in Florence. As Collodi tells us, it took 3 hours and 12 station stops to travel from Florence to Livorno in 1856. A passenger could choose between 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> class travel. But only first class was truly comfortable. Third and fourth classes had open windows which meant having to have your hat securely fastened lest it blow off. Fourth class required standing. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century train travel was still a novelty. When Collodi wrote his guide for a train trip from Florence to Livorno in 1856, many had yet to learn how to travel on the train.

Many of the Englishmen involved with designing the first train lines and stations in Tuscany had been involved with projects throughout the British Empire which meant that Tuscan travel was inserted within an international vortex. Some features were the first of their kind in Italy — this was the case for the wooden canopy built to cover the Arezzo tracks in 1866.

Many of the Tuscan train stations were heavily damaged or entirely destroyed in WWII. This was the case for Arezzo, Cecina, Chiusi, Grosseto, Lucca, Pisa, Piombino, Pistoia, Pontassieve, Pontedra

Prato and Siena.

The first streetcar arrived in Florence in 1879 with routes to Prato, Poggio a Caiano and the Chianti region. In 1881 routes were extended to Signa. These first streetcars were driven by steam engines. The electric streetcar in turn was launched in 1895 to Fiesole and was the first extra-urban electric line in all of Italy and one of the first in Europe. It was installed over the profound objections of the Anglo-Americans (in 1881 John Ruskin referred to the steam omnibus which had a stop in front of the Duomo belltower as a “deluge of profanity”), who decried the introduction of modernity. Nonetheless the electric trams left the Piazza del Duomo every 20 minutes for Fiesole — a trip that took  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour.

By 1895 trolley routes extended to Greve in Chianti — linking parts of the countryside to the





*Firenze (Dintorni)*

*Panorama di Fiesole*

*Printed in Italy*

*Locandini*



Paul Trabert Firenze - Lipsia 42

**Postcard showing the electric tram that traveled between Florence and Fiesole, c. 1900**  
(Collection of the Author)

city for the first time. A few years later various Florentine suburbs were connected. And by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century city trolleys travelled to the nearby locations of Bagno a Ripoli, Grassano, Tavernuzze, Vignone, Campi and Sesto Fiorentino. Typically there were 4 cars on each trolley with each car carrying as many as 40 passengers. In 1914, 17.9 million trips were taken in Florence. By the teens, most towns in Tuscany from the Valdarno valley to Carrara had been electrified.

Longer excursions were organized by the bus company S.I.T.A. founded by FIAT in 1912, which had trips to Volterra, San Gimignano and Siena. By 1917 one could travel by bus to almost any sizeable town in Tuscany. Granted, such travel was arduous. An 83 km journey from Florence to Volterra took more than 5 hours. In 1919 Lazzi-Lenzi-Danti was formed to provide travel west of Florence towards Pistoia and Lucca. By 1922 there were 119 different bus lines in the region, encompassing 3,700 kilometers. The area was second only to the Veneto in terms of the extensive nature of such routes. By the 1920s seasonal bus service extended to the Tuscan coast. All told more than 10 times the number of people traveled by bus than car. In all of Tuscany in 1933 there were 17,000 cars, 158 buses, more than 11,000 motorcycles, 271,000 bicycles and more than 48,000 animal drawn vehicles.

**opposite**  
**Tram No. 1 at the Piazza del Duomo**  
(Photo: Foto Locchi 1943\_ L467-16)

By the 1930s the PNF had reclaimed public transport as a native space that was engaged





with modernity. To do so they laid out new highways and train lines to accommodate the masses. The government worked with the car (Fiat, Lancia), oil (oleoblitz) and tire (Pirelli) industries to ensure that new roads were no longer a luxury reserved for the elite, but a democratized, quotidian and modern infrastructure. That said, peasants did not have cars. Horses and bicycles remained the affordable way to travel in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Trains were however more truly democratic. Train lines crisscrossed the country connecting sites with great speed. Italy was ostensibly available to all, and in the process, the PNF attempted to reclaim the country from foreign travelers.

Indeed, by the 1930s public transportation had shifted to trains. New stations were built throughout Tuscany. And the PNF provided reduced tariffs allowing people living in the country to have affordable access to the city. Whether they travelled by trolley, bus or train in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, passengers could choose between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class tickets. And beginning in the summer of 1931 the government organized “treni popolari” to facilitate visits to historic sites and special events such as the Sienese palio. Third class tickets were offered for as much as 80% off. Throughout the 1930s new stations were built: in Florence and Siena in 1935, in Viareggio in 1936, Montecatini in 1937 and Apuania Massa near the Carrara quarries in 1939 (a town known today as Massa Centro).

The Firenze-Mare autostrada, connecting Florence and Pisa, was constructed between 1928





**Inside of an automobile, 1937** (Photo: Foto Locchi 1937\_L1246)

**A car with occupants photographed in the Piazzale Michelangelo, 1925** (Photo: Alinari AVQ-A-002416-0015)

**Concrete arch over the Firenze-Mare autostrada at Serravalle Pistoiese in the province of Pistoia, 1937**  
(Photo: Foto Locchi 1937\_L1246-9)





**A Fiat '500 from 1969** (Photo: Cosimo Lipparini)

and 1932. It passed through Prato, Pistoia, Montecatini Terme and Lucca. Initiated by the EAT or the *Ente per la Attività Toscane*, and strongly endorsed by Alessandro Pavolini, the PNF secretary for Tuscany, the road provided a strategic link to Tuscan towns being developed for tourism. The EAT often featured sites in the towns that they deemed worth visiting in their monthly journal *L'illustrazione toscana*. They re-mapped Tuscany. If people could afford it, site-seeing drives could be arranged by various travel agencies including Thomas Cook on the Via Tornabuoni.

Not surprisingly there were protests over the expropriation of land for the new highway — particularly by agricultural workers in the Prato region who felt that fertile farmland was being converted into a highway to transport the wealthy to seaside vacation destinations.

There is no doubt that the new *autostrada* was a catalyst for economic development. It helped colonize the countryside — knitting together villages like Collodi with Florence. The idea of mass mobility was key to Fascist programs. There were many train stations and post offices built during the regime — all connecting the nation with modern efficiency. The *autostrada del mare* fits within this framework even if the Italian network was in no way comparable to the wider German autobahn.

That said, only the wealthy had their own cars in the 1930s. The FIAT Balilla was launched



A tourist studying the departure/arrival board at the Florence airport  
(Photo: Cosimo Lipparini)



in 1932, but at 10,800 lire was still beyond the means of most middle class consumers. By 1938 there were only 289,000 cars in Italy compared to almost 2 million in France. This meant that there were only 7 cars for every 100 people. According to a 1933 AAA guide to motoring abroad, Americans were reassured that unlike US highways, the Italian autostrade were not crowded.

By 1932 the TCI or Touring Club Italiano found it necessary to produce a map of Italian roads designed for the exclusive use of cars. The so-called *Carta Automobilistica d'Italia al 200.000* was considered to be entirely new.

It was not until after WWII that car ownership became more widespread. The first FIAT 500 was released in 1949 to meet post-war demand. The new Fiat 500, known as the *Nuova* was produced from 1957-1975. It was small (measuring under 10 feet), affordable, and immensely popular. Vintage Fiat 500s can now be rented.

In the post-war era Italy emerged as a center of superior car design: Fiat, Lancia, Alfa Romeo, and Ferrari. Fiat has won the European Car of the Year award nine times since the mid-1960s. Ferrari has created the most expensive car in the world.

Today, most tourists to Tuscany arrive by plane — in the Vespucci airport in Peretola. The airport first received passenger planes in the 1940s. In the next several years the airport hopes to expand to become one of the most influential hubs in the country.



The bright green of the young corn sets off the grey purple of the olive hills, and the spring skies have been in every one of the backgrounds of Fra Angelico  
(John Ruskin, letter to his father, May 3, 1845)

Soon the lane passed through a hamlet consisting of a few farm-houses, the shabbiest and dreariest that can be conceived, ancient, and ugly, and dilapidated, with iron-gated windows below, and heavy wooden shutters on the windows above — high, ruinous walls shutting in the courts, and ponderous gates, one of which was off its hinges. The farm-yards were perfect pictures of disarray and slovenly administration of home affairs.  
(Nathaniel Hawthorne, *French and Italian Note-Books*, 1858)

And many a Tuscan eve I wandered down  
the cypress alley like a ghost  
That tries its feeble ineffectual breath  
Upon its charred funeral-brands put  
Too soon, where black and stiff stood up the trees  
Against the broad vermillion of the skies.  
(Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh*, 1864)

Traveling through the Tuscan countryside prior to WWII was difficult. Roads were made of tamped earth, dusty and largely inadequate for motor travel. Automobiles, horse-drawn carriages, and people shared the same space. Although the first International Road Congress was held in 1908 (in Paris), Italy was slow to improve roads — largely because there were so few vehicles in Italy. Motor travel was restricted to those who had access to a car and could drive. In the mid-1920s when Italy's first motorway (for the exclusive use of automobiles) was constructed — the so-called *autostrada dei laghi* in Northern Italy — there were only 85,000 cars on Italian roads.

Italy's TCI or Touring Club Italiano founded in 1894 soon targeted the motoring audience with its monthly journal *Le vie d'Italia*. The journal was distributed to TCI members (75,000 in 1921, 180,000 by 1927), and featured essays on interesting places to visit, copious advertisements for gas, motor oil and tires, as well as maps. While the national network of roads extended into Tuscany, travelling through the region was time-consuming and arduous. Given

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**View of the landscape as seen from the Villa la Foce**  
(Photo: Karl Tsui)

the rarity of cars and drivers in the 1920s and 1930s, exploring the Tuscan countryside remained a largely elite activity. Bernard Berenson, who frequently motored to Tuscan villages to appraise and collect art, did so with a driver. He owned a car, but did not drive. And he was not alone. The same was true for Vernon Lee, Sybil Cutting and Edith Wharton. The Tuscan countryside was constructed by outsiders. The journal's original subtitle *Turismo nazionale. Movimento dei Forestieri. Prodotto Italiano* seemed to say it all. Foreigners still dominated Italian roadways. Not surprisingly, the organization was one of the many targeted in 1937 when Mussolini mounted an attack against foreign culture — it was then that the TCI was renamed the CTI or *Consociazione Turistica Italiana*.

The Origo estate of Villa la Foce in the Southernmost part of Tuscany brings together many issues. It is an estate that was reclaimed by Iris and Antonio Origo. Iris was an Anglo-American heiress who was invested in the expatriate community in Florence (her mother owned the Villa Medici, was a friend of Berenson and married to the English architect Geoffrey Scott, author of the influential *Architecture of Humanism*) and Anto-





nio, her Italian born husband. Although the estate was not a touristic site in the 1930s (it was on the 1929 TCI map, but was still difficult to reach), it has since come to be an iconic landmark within the Tuscan paradise. More importantly it is both a landscape of foreign definition and Italian reclamation. It is simultaneously a set of working farms and a romanticized stronghold.

It is worth noting that peasants constituted the largest workforce of the interwar period. They worked in all parts of the country. Some were landless farmworkers, others were tenant farmers or small landholders and some were sharecroppers. The system of *mezzadria* or sharecropping dates to the 9<sup>th</sup> century, was pervasive to central Italy, and largely defined the Tuscan agrarian landscape for more than ten centuries. According to Duccio Balestracci, who has written about two farm diaries spanning the years from 1439-1502, the practice began near Siena.

While the practice of *mezzadria* existed throughout Italy by the 1930s, it was most concentrated in central Italy with 87% of all agricultural workers being either sharecroppers or day



The cypress-lined winding farm road designed by Cecil Pinsent on land formerly a part of the Villa La Foce estate  
(Photo: Karl Tsui)



opposite  
**Armando  
Bruni, peasants  
gathered in front  
of a rural house**  
(Photo: Alinari  
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**Armando  
Bruni, a family  
of peasants  
gathered in front  
of a rural house**  
(Photo: Alinari  
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laborers. According to the censuses of 1911 and 1936 more than 50% of the region's workforce was in agriculture<sup>1</sup>. Although the region boasted significant raw materials (iron, copper, lead, mercury, and borax), textile and brick factories, Tuscany was not known for its industrial prowess in the decades following unification. In Tuscany, 42% of the workers were sharecroppers — a figure that was only surpassed in le Marche where 53% of all workers were sharecroppers. While all regions had significant numbers of day laborers, only Tuscany, Le Marche, Umbria (22%), and Emilia Romagna (28.5%) survived on sharecropping<sup>2</sup>. Together these regions constituted the central core of Italy. And yet, of all regions Tuscany emerged as distinct — largely because there were more *fattorie* or estates in Tuscany than any other area. As of 1938 there were 4,121 *fattorie*. By way of comparison there were 809 in le Marche and 736 in Umbria. Of all the regions in Tuscany, Siena alone had a staggering 1205 *fattorie*<sup>3</sup>. By some accounts, 80% of the farmland in central Italy was managed through the system of *mezzadria* — meaning that the visual logic of Tuscany was defined by this particular agricultural practice<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Vera Zamagni, *The economic history of Italy, 1860-1990 from the periphery to the centre*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Zamagni, *The Economic History of Italy*, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> On the statistics see Gianfranco Molteni, editor, *Buonconvento. Museo della Mezzadria senese*, (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2008), p. 39. For a history of the earliest phase of mezzadria in Tuscany see Ildebrando Imberciadori, *Mezzadri Classica Toscana con Documentazione Inedita dal IX al XIV sec.*, (Florence: Vallecchi, 1951).

<sup>4</sup> Antonio Masi, *La fine della mezzadria contadina*, (Florence: Centro Editoriale Toscano, 2003), p. 15





The practice was still in place during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and is outlined by Iris Origo in various writings<sup>5</sup>. The Origo estate of La Foce, situated in the Orcia River Valley outside Chianciano Terme, between Siena and Lake Trasimeno, about halfway between Florence and Rome consisted initially of about 15 farms, each of about 100 acres, located around a central villa with its attached 15<sup>th</sup>-century *fattoria*.

Similar to other landowners in the *mezzadria* system, the Origos decided what crops would be grown and what agricultural methods employed. They provided the capital for purchase of tools, seeds and livestock and maintained the buildings. They made improvements to the land such as maintaining roads and improving irrigation systems. The farmers and their families in turn provided the labor. Together, they shared the profits.

Such an arrangement was typical. The landlord provided the farm (*podere*) and house (*casa colonica*) while the tenant (*mezzadro*) provided the labor. In addition to turning over half of the crops, the *mezzadro* typically provided the *fattoria*, or estate's administrative center, with a specified number of eggs and cheese — foodstuffs which were often not recorded in account books kept by the *fattore*, or estate manager. The supply of meat from butchered livestock also lay outside *mezzadria* contracts or *patti colonici*. Since it was the *fattore* who dictated when fields were to be tilled, threshing was to be done, and grapes harvested etc. the *mezzadro* had relatively little say in when or how his labor was provided.

The *mezzadri* often lived on farms for hundreds of years — renewing their *mezzadria* contract annually. Any given farmhouse could be occupied by multiple generations. It was not unusual for large families (upwards of 30 people) to live together in a small space.

Typically each nuclear family had its own bedroom. Parents slept with their children, commonly as many as 8 in one bed — on a mattress stuffed with cornhusks, in a room that was unheated. Adopted children — referred to as *bargallini* or *nocentrini* after the Florentine Bigallo or Hospital of the Innocents where orphaned children were left — were often taken

<sup>5</sup> See Iris Origo, *War in Val D'Orcia. An Italian War Diary 1943-1944*, (Boston: David John Murray, 1970).





Farmhouse, 19<sup>th</sup>-century, in the Tuscan Maremma (Photo: Alinari MFC-F-003176-0000)

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### The Farmhouse Ideal

For an understanding of ideal farmhouse layout one needs to turn to the work of Ferdinando Morozzi (1723-1785) a Tuscan cartographer and hydraulic engineer who worked for the grand duchy. Although the manuscript for his 40 volume study of rural architecture was lost, he did publish a study in 1770 (*Delle Case de' Contadini. Trattato Architettonico*, Florence: Gaet. Carriagi). His treatise was filled with analysis of the various components needed in farmhouses — located in the fields, hills and mountains. This is the ideal farmhouse. Morozzi also leaves a lot out. There is no discussion of building materials or bathrooms. And, by his account, buildings were unheated — although typically the kitchen was the only warm room in the house. While ideal, Morozzi's house was remarkably similar to that of Antonio Masi — whose father was a *capoccia* — and presumably had a house that was above average for a sharecropper.

While the location of houses depended upon the availability of water, fertility of the soil, and the direction of the winds, Morozzi notes that houses were simultaneously a house, barn, and workspace. Farmers slept in the same building as their animals and worked their crops adjacent to where they cooked and ate. This was what some sharecroppers referred to as perfect harmony. It was extreme functionality.

Although there was an infinite variety of farmhouse configurations, houses typically had some shared features. These included on the ground floor a stone or brick staircase, a courtyard that was large enough to tend to animal needs such as shearing sheep and

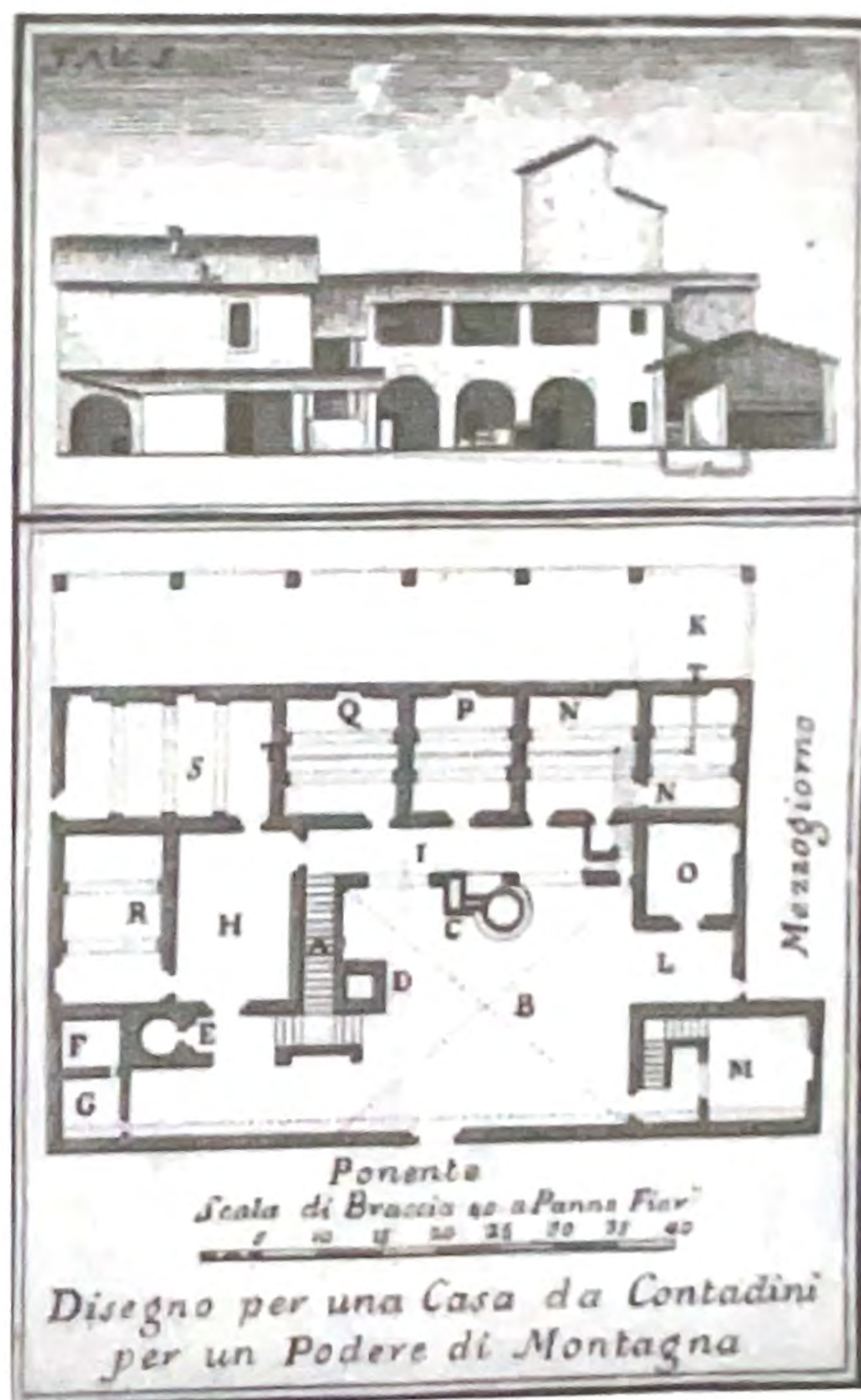
opposite  
Ferdinando  
Morozzi,  
farmhouse plan  
from *Delle Case  
de' Contadini*.  
*Trattato  
Architettonico*,  
1770



milking cows, a cistern or well, an oven, stalls for sheep and goats, separate stalls for cows, horses and pigs, a *tinaia* or wine cellar where grapes could be processed after the *vendemmia*, or harvest, a canteen where wine, cherries and other foodstuffs could be stored, a room for the pressing of olives, a room for dairy production — making cream and butter, a small room for drying chestnuts, an area for the drying and storage of hay, a covered area for the storage of wagons, a room for weaving baskets and working in metal, and finally a chicken coop. On the first floor there was a kitchen — large enough to accommodate the entire household. In between the ceiling beams could hang garlic, onions, fennel and animal skins. The number of bedrooms varied. Ideally each was large enough to have two beds — what kind, the reader is not told. Although Masi

claimed that his was metal. The room belonging to the *capoccia* would have a view over the estate. Nearby there would have been a granary and a sunny *colombaia* or dovecote to house pigeons or doves, which were kept for eggs, flesh and dung. There was a loggia on the first floor — a covered workspace in times of rain. Each space had a specific purpose. Most spaces were geared to production.

Morozzi provided a detailed discussion of each element, repeatedly invoking the need for an architect to properly design the houses.





in to provide extra labor. Spaces were cramped. In more modern houses, pigs, cows and chickens had their own domicile.

The efforts of the *mezzadri* were coordinated by the head of household known as the *capoccia*. The productivity of any given estate was dependent on matching the size of farms with the size of households. The *capoccia* contractually obligated everyone in the household to work. The *capoccia* also made sure that no one in the household committed an infraction such as drinking, gambling, or thieving — as such an infraction would allow the landlord to evict the sharecroppers — which sometimes happened. While sharecroppers could seek out new landlords and relocate, mobility was rare. The *capoccia* was almost always male, typically the only literate member of the household, and often the only person allowed to leave the farm — to go to weekly markets held in nearby towns or the city. The *fattore* sought to ensure that as few people as possible needed to leave the *fattoria*. So as to ensure that this was the case, larger estates typically had their own school and church. Some even maintained a blacksmith, cooper and mill. As such they were self-contained villages.

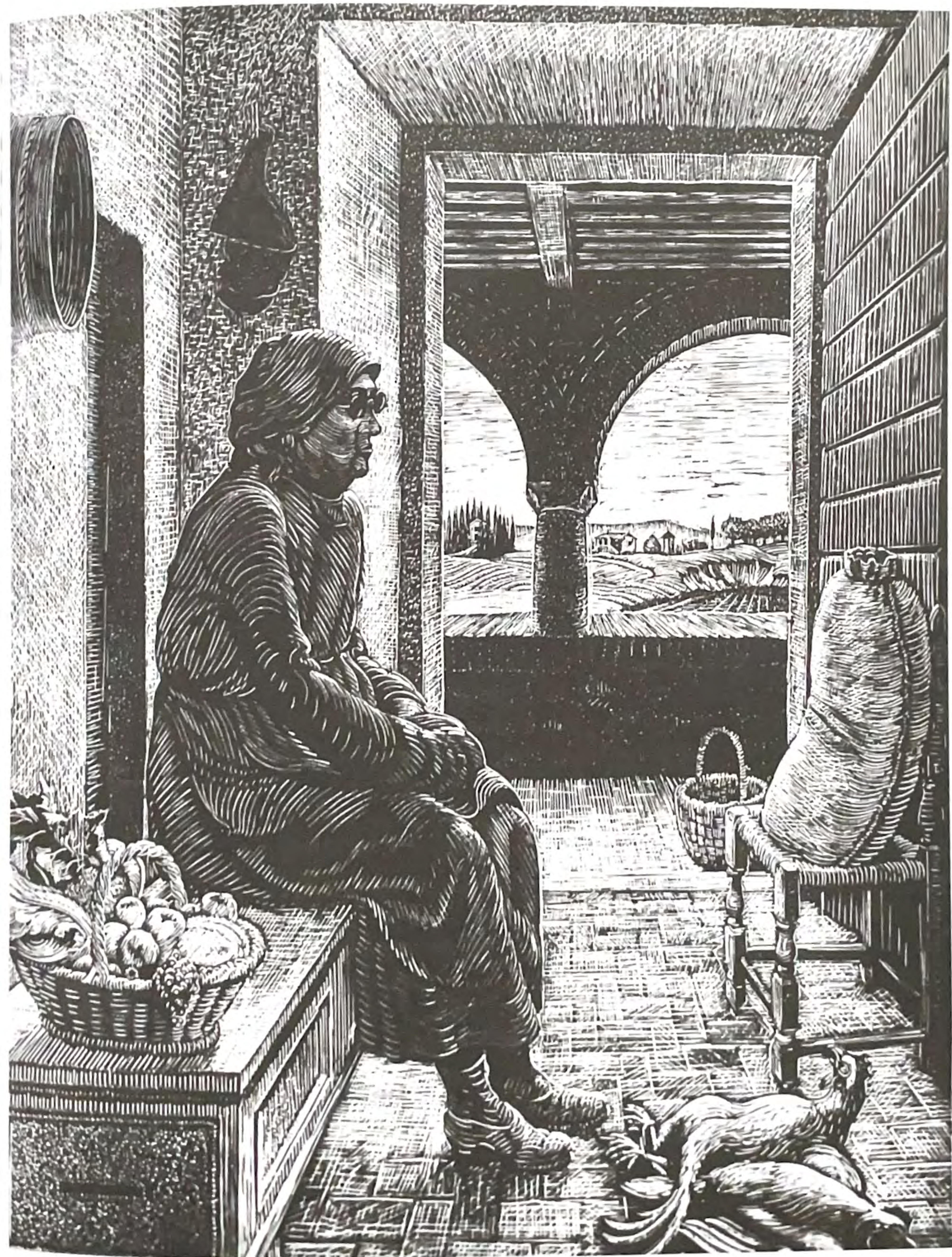
The *mezzadria* system was hierarchical and paternalistic. The way in which any estate was run depended upon the nature, interests and capabilities of the landlord, *fattore*, *capoccia* and finally workers — in that order. And while the *capoccia* managed farm labor, his wife, or *massaia* managed the house and all foodstuffs, including cooking the food.

As they went about their business most peasants wore *zoccoli* — carved wooden shoes that they made at home. Leather shoes — handmade by a cobbler — were reserved for special occasions such as weddings or communions. And they were expensive — paid for only after threshing season. Children were almost always shoeless, wearing *zoccoli* only when they went to school. Antonio Masi, a Tuscan sharecropper (b. 1922), reminds us that peasants' feet were so callused, it was hard to walk and when they did they learned to put their heel down first as it was less painful<sup>6</sup>. The value of shoes in this period is underscored in Roberto Rossellini's acclaimed 1946 film *Paisan* when Pasquale, a poor boy from Naples who lives in unimaginable squalor, steals shoes from a sleeping American soldier. The neo-realist film, shot in real locations, using unprofessional actors, underscored Italy's profound poverty. The theft of a sturdy pair of shoes only reinforced the point. Most estates ranged from 5-30 farms. In the commune of Montalcino there were 870 sharecropping families at the end of the war working on farms owned by only 14 fami-

opposite  
Dario Neri, *La  
Fatoressa di  
Campriano*,  
xylograph, 1932,  
35 x 46 cm.,  
reproduced  
from Dario Neri:  
*dipinti, incisioni,  
libri*, p. 40 (Siena:  
Nuova Immagine  
Editrice, 1995)

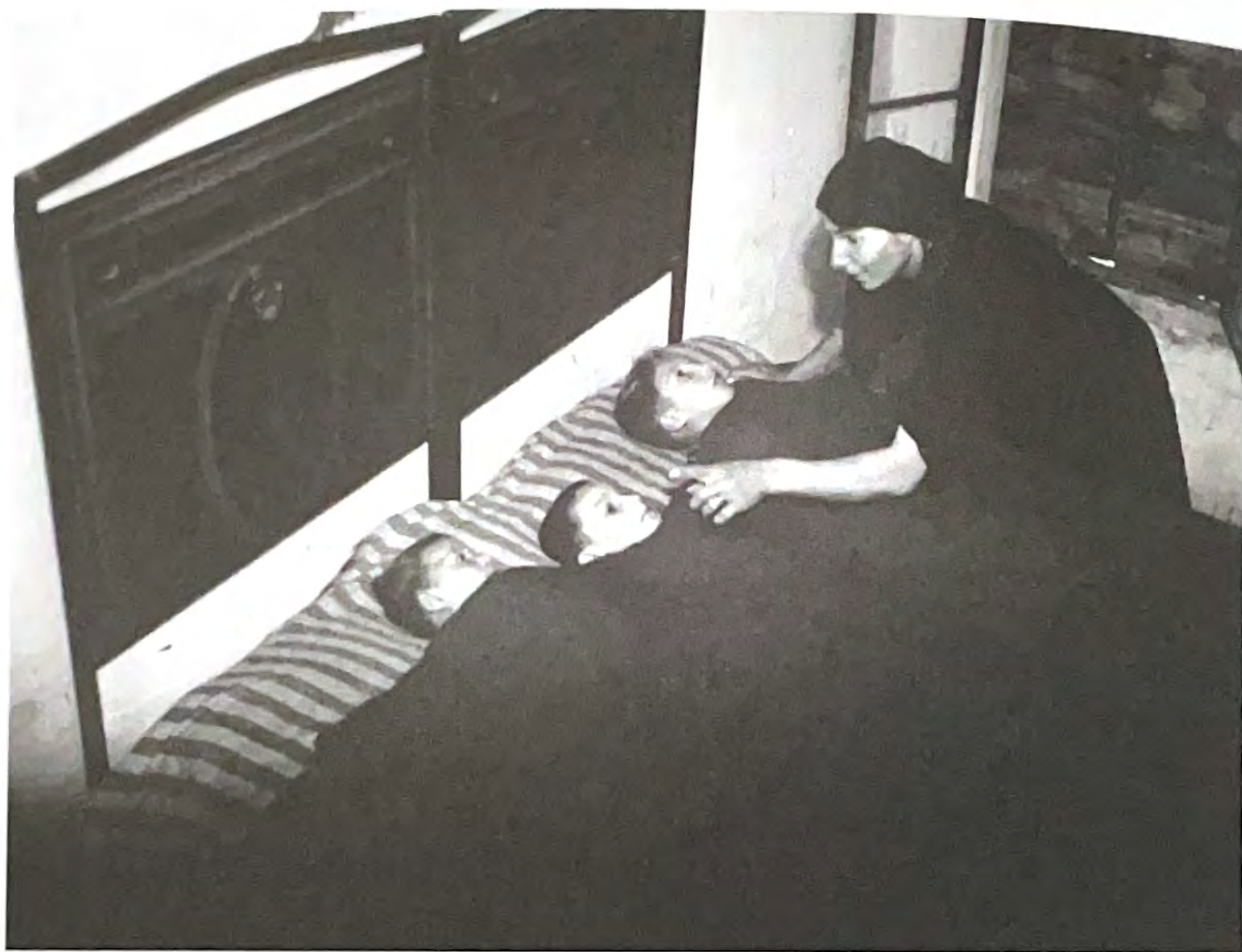
<sup>6</sup> Antonio Masi, *A quei tempi nel podere: memorie di un fattore spicciolo*, (Firenze: Centro editoriale toscano, 1993), p. 43.







Peasant children  
being put to bed  
(Photo: Alinari  
RCB-F-005789-  
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lies<sup>7</sup>. As a result, huge territories were in the hands of very few people. Most landlords inherited their farms — underscoring the extent to which the Tuscan landscape was controlled by the same families for generations. And these families almost always lived in the city — in Florence, Siena or even Rome. The Origos were anomalous as they not only purchased their estate but they lived onsite in the *fattoria* from where they oversaw many improvements — including the construction of new farmhouses, roads and villa gardens all designed by the English landscape architect Cecil Pinsent. While the Origos were invested in their estate — modernizing both farmhouses and farming methods, many landlords were not. Some were notorious in their dereliction of duty.

The *mezzadria* system ultimately produced a population of *mezzadri* who were isolated from the city. The *mezzadri* were largely invisible to urban viewers — except in the imaginings of the countryside by writers and painters. Such isolation was key to the success of the system. Even when most of Italy's rural workers were thriving in increasingly commercialized environments in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, those in central Italy remained ensconced in a feudal system.

<sup>7</sup> Jeff Pratt, *The Rationality of Rural Life. Economic and Cultural Change in Tuscany*, (Routledge, 1995), p. 122



Sharecroppers typically had few rights. They had little or no money — subsisting on their share of crops, which were so labor intensive to produce, they had little time for anything else. It is important to remember that almost everything prior to WWII was done by hand — the sowing, pruning, picking, weeding, and spade digging. While oxen were used in plowing, mechanized equipment was only used for threshing. By 1936 there were 30,000 threshing machines and 32,000 tractors in Italy<sup>8</sup>. Many of the latter were Pavesi tractors manufactured by a company in Turin. Their purchase and use was often the subject of a government-sponsored photo shoot so as to document the arrival of modernity. Twelve-hour workdays were common. And as of 1907 when a law eliminated the idea of leisure on Sunday, 7-day work weeks were the norm<sup>9</sup>. Furthermore, *mezzadria* contracts specified how much land had to be worked each year, ensuring that sharecroppers were constantly working. Any behavior that was seen as idle could be responsible for their eviction. Sharecropping was the ultimate pan-optical system.

This is of course nothing new. In the 1520s peasants rebelled across Europe — demanding greater autonomy. More than 100,000 in Germany alone were killed in retribution. This was a cataclysmic event prompting Albrecht Dürer to design a monument celebrating victory over the peasants featuring farm animals, baskets of fruit, and tools crowned by a murdered peasant. Although it was never built, the monument was designed in the spirit of the age — when landed princes were in collusion with the preaching of Martin Luther to suppress peasants who sought to free themselves from servitude — gaining the right to fish and hunt, choose their own pastor, and have regularized rents.

Carlo Levi has noted that peasants in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had no representation in the government and no defense under the law<sup>10</sup>. Few were engaged in national or even regional politics. Antonio Masi remembers that no one ever discussed politics. His father, disabled in WWI, did not even get the right to vote until after the war. Women could not vote until 1946. Despite this, there were a few peasant uprisings during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Between 1919-1921 sharecroppers organized strikes and demonstrations and ultimately were successful in re-negotiating their contracts. And yet, the system of *mezzadria* not only remained in place, but became official state policy with the help of landlords who poured money into the Fascist cause. Tuscan landlords perpetuated the *mezzadria* system for political reasons. Their role in the PNF underscores this. But, by the mid 1940s, the sharecroppers were more successful in their revolts — often forming unions and farming cooperatives

<sup>8</sup> Perry Willson, *Peasant Women and Politics in Fascist Italy. The Massaie Rurali*, (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Pratt, *The Rationality of Rural Life*, p. 44.

<sup>10</sup> Carlo Levi, *Christ Stopped at Eboli. The Story of a Year*, (New York: Farrar, Straus & Company, 1947), p. 143.





**Two women  
gathering hay,  
c. 1830-1940**  
(Photo: Alinari  
BVA-F-003752-  
0000)

**opposite  
Peasants  
gathered to  
plan a revolt  
in the 1976  
film *Novecento***  
(Photo: Frame  
Enlargement)

with the support of the Tuscan Communist Party. Emilio Sereni emerged at this time as simultaneously one of the great Italian political theorists, Communists and historians of the countryside. His career shows us that these arenas go hand in hand.

While sharecropping has traditionally had negative connotations, there are some who argue that it has preserved the Tuscan landscape. In other words sharecropping did not support the impoverishing effects of large-scale monocultures seen elsewhere. Instead, under the sharecropping system, small family run farms survived longer than anywhere else in Italy and ensured that the deceptively bucolic appearance of the Tuscan landscape has endured<sup>11</sup>. Bianchi Bandinelli (the historian who narrated Hitler's 1938 visit to Florence) has gone so far as to claim that poverty never afflicted the Tuscan peasant.

And yet, despite the seemingly rosy appearance, the success of Tuscan sharecropping was already threatened by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Dukes of Lorraine opened agricultural markets to foreign competition, meaning that potentially cheaper foods could now be imported and the poverty of the *mezzadria* was thus reinforced<sup>12</sup>. Things seemed to deterior-

<sup>11</sup> Zamagni, *Economic History of Italy*, p. 70.

<sup>12</sup> Benedetta Origo, Morna Livingston, Laurie Olin, and John Dixon Hunt, *La Foce. A Garden and Landscape in*





rate from there. By the 1920s only about one quarter of Tuscan fields were cultivated. Many landowners were in debt, and most farmers lived in miserable conditions with few possessions — not even furniture or even shoes (underscored by the fact that during the war Iris Origo kept shoes on hand-made from leather acquired on the black market — to give out as needed). Origo recounted in her wartime diary that the Tuscan countryside was marked by “appalling poverty” or as her husband Antonio noted, was in “a primitive state”<sup>13</sup>. In half-ruined farms, “the roofs leaked, the stairs were worn away, many windows were boarded up or stuffed with rags, and the poverty-stricken families (often consisting of more than twenty souls) were huddled together in dark, airless little rooms”.

At one farm, Origo found in the same bed “an old man dying and a woman giving birth to a child”. Perhaps such primitive conditions compelled Iris to travel 100 miles south to Rome in order to give birth to her daughter Donata in 1943 in a hospital instead of in rural Tuscany. Presumably there was no doctor of note in the entire Val d’Orcia.

As Iris noted there was one school for the entire *La Foce fattoria*, and “in many cases the distances were so great and the tracks so bad in winter, that only a few children could attend regularly”<sup>14</sup>.

*Tuscany* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), p. 21.

<sup>13</sup> The poor conditions of these rural residents is confirmed by Antonio Origo, “Verso la bonifica integrale di un’azienda nella Val d’Orcia, in *Atti della R. Accademia dei Georgofili*, 1937, pp. 18-30, see p. 26 in particular.

<sup>14</sup> Iris Origo, *Images and Shadows. Part of a Life*, (London: John Murray, 1970) pp. 203-204.



## The Rural Hamlet of Collodi

The Tuscan hamlet of Collodi seems to cascade down a hillside located halfway between Lucca and Pistoia. Simple stone houses form the backdrop to the imposing 17<sup>th</sup>-century Villa Garzoni owned by the Garzoni family until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. At one time, the villagers had to pass through the villa in order to get to their homes. The village provides the classic confrontation between Tuscan socio-economic conditions.

More famously the village provides the pen name for the eponymous author of *Pinocchio*, published first as a serial in 1881-2 and then as a book in 1883 by Carlo Lorenzini aka Carlo Collodi. Although Lorenzini was born in Florence, he spent much of his youth in his mother's hometown of Collodi.

*Pinocchio* is the most famous secular book of all time, translated into English in 1892. Throughout the text, the puppet is both poor and hungry — not unlike the residents of the village. Since 1956, adjacent to the garden of the Villa Garzoni, is Pinocchio Park — a small theme park featuring oversized versions of Pinocchio's principal protagonists. In 1940 the Walt Disney studio released its second feature length animated movie — *Pinocchio*. Although based on Collodi's novel, the film greatly transformed both characters and plot. Disney added the character of Jiminy Cricket, who entices Pinocchio to make the right decisions and talks like a human. Stromboli of Disney fame is Mangiafuoco in the novel. And Geppetto, who is eaten by a whale in the movie is consumed by a shark in the book. Most importantly in Disney's movie Pinocchio becomes a sympathetic innocent and cute boy, not the cold and calculating puppet of the book. The film won two Oscars (for best original score and song "When You Wish Upon a Star" sung by Jiminy), but it was a box office disaster. It was not until its re-release that the film started to turn a profit. Since 1940 the film has been re-released 10 times. Today Disney's Pinocchio is a star at the Disney theme parks — parading down main street.

opposite  
The Villa Garzoni  
and village of  
Collodi  
(Photo: Alamy)

Almost every Italian author has dealt with Pinocchio since its publication. Even Roberto Benigni, the Tuscan actor and director has undertaken his version, noting that he thought as a child that the statue of Dante in the Piazza Santa Croce was actually Pinocchio. Collodi was a prolific writer. *Pinocchio* was just one of his many accomplishments. He wrote for periodicals such as the Florentine *il Fanfulla* and *Strenna Garibaldi*. He published works of fiction and non-fiction for adults and children. In 1848 he helped found the daily satirical paper *il Lampione*, on which the Macchiaoli painter Telemaco Signorini collaborated.

As an ardent supporter of Italian unification, Collodi fought in two failed revolutionary wars seeking to establish a self-governed Italy free from foreign rule. By 1868 Collodi became





an employee of the newly formed Ministry of Education advocating for education reform, helping to write a dictionary of the Italian language that established a uniform way of speaking and spelling, and composing important math, grammar and geography textbooks. He also edited the *Giornale per I Bambini*, the weekly periodical where Pinocchio was first serialized. In 1880 Collodi wrote a book for children *Il Viaggio per l'Italia di Giannetto* which was a three-part introduction to the sites of Italy. It was intended to familiarize children to a newly unified Italy through a series of itineraries, fictitious letters, history lessons and questions and answers. Published in three parts, the section on Tuscany included a stopover in the village of Collodi.





School children travelling to school on the "School bus" initiated by Iris Origo at the La Foce estate, c. 1935  
(Photo: Villa la Foce)

## R

### Primary School Education

There were laws making education compulsory for two years (in 1859) and four years (in 1877). This was extended to the age of 12 (in 1904) with the hope of improving literacy rates in Italy. For rural children, the walk to school was long. For Antonio Masi the walk took 45 minutes, sometimes crossing wild streams. In the Val d'Orcia there were periods in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when the school remained closed for the lack of a teacher. And when it was open, it was sometimes only open for a few months.

In 1923 the Gentile reform required children to attend school until the age of 14 and created uniform national requirements for the number of years in the Scuola Materna, Inferiore, Media (until 1962), and Liceo. That said, rural schools were still few and far between. In the Val d'Orcia there were two schools serving the entire valley population, with one teacher managing multiple grades. And somehow, many avoided school altogether. Masi notes that he was the first in his family to attend.

To facilitate school attendance the Origos instituted *La Foce Scuolabus*, a horse-drawn schoolbus that stopped at the La Foce farms and brought children to school. Iris Origo even transformed several rooms in the La Foce fattoria to serve as classrooms. In the meantime, illiterates over the age of 14 were being taught at night.

During Fascism the government distributed schoolbooks and notebooks to children, often with graphic, politically themed covers.

opposite  
Child's notebook  
depicting  
children  
participating  
in the Battle  
of the Grain,  
front cover,  
collection of the  
Wolfsonian-  
Florida  
International  
University,  
Miami Beach,  
Florida  
(Photo: Silvia Ros,  
ITA 2 83.2.501)



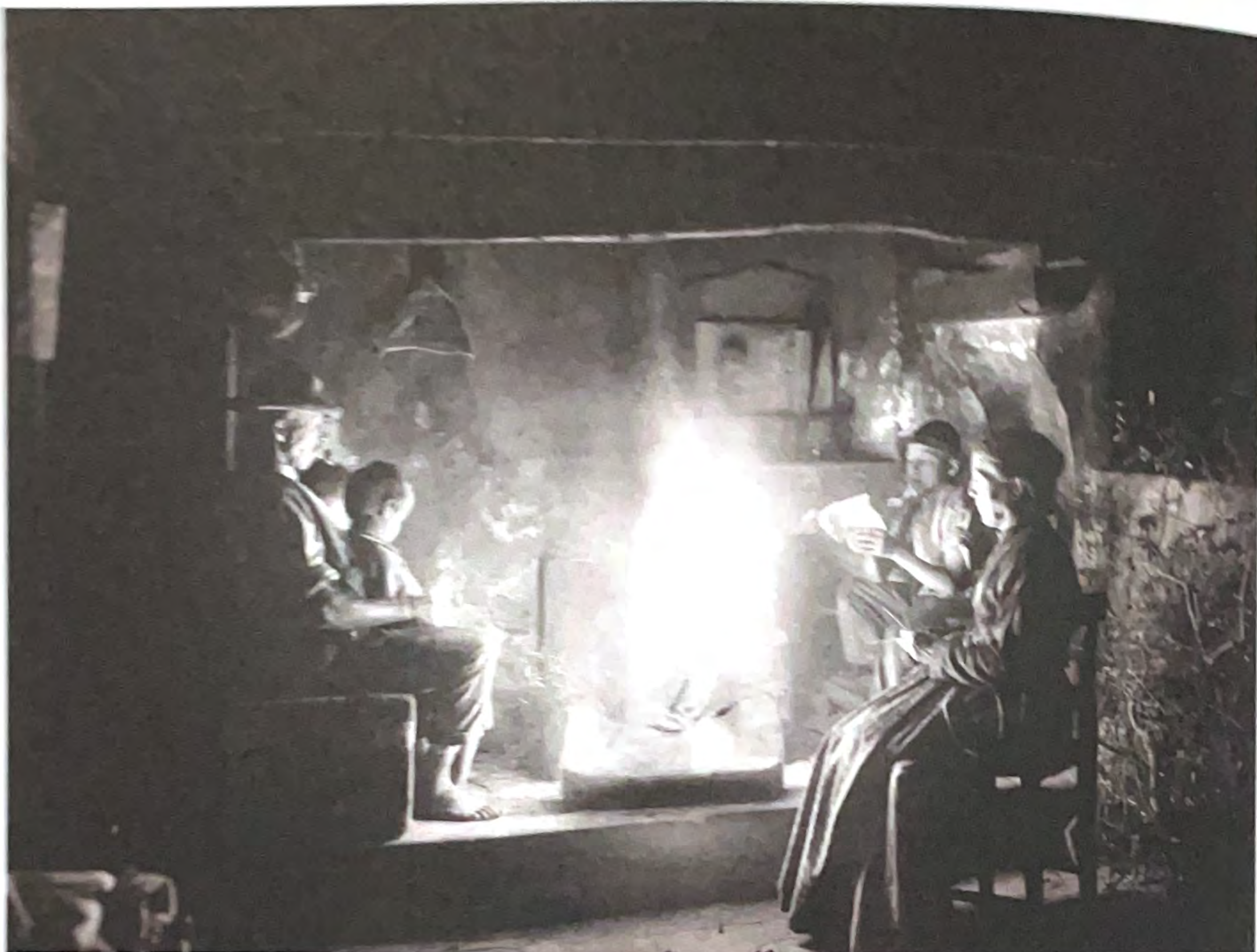
# LA BATTAGLIA DEL GRANO



## QUADERNO

Elaboro Ester





Peasants  
gathered by fire  
in a house near  
Florence  
(Photo: Alinari  
ACA-F-000SN1-  
0000)

Not surprisingly *contadini* were extremely superstitious and largely illiterate, making the introduction of modern ways of life very difficult. According to Antonio Masi, only half of the children attended lessons beyond elementary school<sup>15</sup>. Some children only went to school at night — so as not to let lessons interfere with farm work. And no one was encouraged to go. According to the population census of 1931 only 7% of children attended school after the age of 11 in the entire country. Only 10.9% attended in 1936<sup>16</sup>. If we are to believe Antonio Origo, only 20% of the population of Val d'Orcia was literate in 1927<sup>17</sup>. Perhaps surprisingly this figure is lower than the literacy rate of 26% reported for Tuscany in 1861<sup>18</sup>. This was a crisis in education during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Things actually got worse in the decades following unification. Nello Quaranti, a sharecropper near Prato, noted that peasants read very little. They never bought a newspaper, only looking through the *Cronaca di Firenze* if they happened to find a copy<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Masi, *La fine della mezzadria*, p. 89.

<sup>16</sup> Zamagni, *Economic History of Italy*, p. 305.

<sup>17</sup> Origo, "Verso la bonifica integrale" p. 27.

<sup>18</sup> Zamagni, *Economic History of Italy*, p. 14.

<sup>19</sup> Fabrizio Nucci and Debora Pellegrinotti, *Mezzadria e sviluppo in Val di Bisenzio. La storia delle Fattorie Spranger e Del Bello (1844-1950)*, (Florence: Centro Editoriale Toscano, 1994), 203.



While conditions on Tuscan farms were far from ideal, conditions were even harder elsewhere in Italy. Carlo Levi recounted hardships in the southern village of Aliano near Matera in a chronicle of his three-year exile beginning in 1935. He noted that the extreme difficulties of peasant survival caused many to emigrate to the United States or the new Italian colonies in East Africa. The countryside was desolate. People had little property. Their children were underfed, the soil they worked was so poor that even vegetable gardens were shabby. Peasants were so impoverished that some chose to slaughter the few animals they had, rather than pay taxes on them. Such adversity was compounded by natural disasters, “hailstorms, landslides, droughts, malaria”<sup>20</sup>. In Matera, families were packed into the tufa *sassi* with dirt floors, no running water or electricity<sup>21</sup>. What little livestock there was slept with their human owners. Things were dire. Not surprisingly, the peasants Levi encountered had little opportunity for education. As was typical of many areas, the rural village where he lived during the second half of the 1930s had no doctor.

The situation in the Pontine region south of Rome was no better. Rural territories were subject to intense malaria outbreaks. By some accounts, the mortality rate for those afflicted was as high as 80% in 1924<sup>22</sup>. Housing was miserable and unhygienic. The one-room mud and straw huts, known as *lestre*, were cramped. Large families typically slept together with their livestock in conditions that have been described as desolate and miserable<sup>23</sup>.

In *the Marble Faun* the character Donatello observes that “the country was not really the paradise it looked to be”<sup>24</sup>. Cottages were wretched and the farmhouses dreary. The peasants appeared to live in “grimy poverty”. And while the peasant’s life and his “picturesquely time-stained” home might “fascinate the poet’s imagination or painter’s eye” the life of the peasant was “waning to decay and ruin”. As Hawthorne noted, the countryside “would be a hideous scene to contemplate on a rainy day, or when no human life pervaded it”<sup>25</sup>. No one could have said it better than Hawthorne. While the countryside was picturesque, it was miserable for those who lived in it. There was simply nothing idyllic, scenic or romantic about life in the *campo*. It was virtual slavery.

Scenes of crumbling farm houses, barefoot peasants tending to oxen, hay-laden carts and sunsets were popular amongst both the *Macchiaoli* and the cadre of American Impressionists

<sup>20</sup> Levi, *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, p. 76.

<sup>21</sup> D. T. Max “A Cave with a View”, *The New Yorker*, April 27, 2015, pp. 32-39.

<sup>22</sup> R. Louis Gentilcore, “Reclamation in the Agro Pontino, Italy” *Geographical Review*, vol. 60, n.3 (July 1970), pp. 301-327, p. 306.

<sup>23</sup> Cesare Giorgiani, “Terra redenta: realta che sembra fiaba” in Roberta Sciarretta, ed., *Parole della bonifica: Narrativa, poesia teatro e Agro Pontino*, (Latina: Novecento 2007), p. 218.

<sup>24</sup> Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun, or, The Romance of Monte Beni*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 184.

<sup>25</sup> Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun*, p. 182.



who called Florence home for a period of time. Individuals such as Telemaco Signorini, Silvestro Lega and Giovanni Fattori were drawn to depicting scenes with revelatory realism. And, they painted real scenes outside. They were particularly attracted to Italian traditions and scenes of rural life. Given that many of *IMacchiaoli* had fought in the battle for unification, their quest for a more painterly realism had political undertones. They sought to represent what they considered to be the authentic Italy. And as they did their paintings detailed the difficulties of the rural in the way Hawthorne articulated. Like Americans living abroad (Elihu Vedder, William Merritt Chase, Frank Duveneck and John Singer Sargent) their paintings presented a rural landscape in which houses were crumbling, feet were often unshod and work was hard. This rendering was continued in the work of the prolific Sienese artist Dario Neri (one of the men responsible for the 1928 redesign of the Palio) from Murlo. He avidly painted the Tuscan landscape during the 1930s.

Despite the obvious difficulties of Italian farm life in the 1920s and 1930s, the Fascist government “imposed a total reconfirmation of the fundamental principles of the classical *mezzadria*” system<sup>26</sup>. The government made various attempts to reinvigorate the system in Tuscany and elsewhere, including the Pontine<sup>27</sup>. Iris Origo was one of the many who sought to reclaim farmland during the regime with government support<sup>28</sup>. She and her husband Antonio purchased their estate in 1924 and proceeded to establish programs of crop rotation and reforestation, increase the amount of livestock and percent of arable land, plant olive groves and grapevines, build new roads and farmhouses increasing the number to 57, as well as enhance facilities for education (for 90 children) and medical care. In the end, the estate reached a size of 7,000 acres and boasted about 600 inhabitants. Iris made it a particular project to increase the literacy rate amongst the farmers and their dependents. By all accounts the Origos were forward-thinking landowners. But without the intervention of landowners such as the Origos, many small farms were abandoned — with farmers seeking alternative livelihoods in the neighboring towns and cities or even abroad.

In the years following World War II the system of *mezzadria* began to die out. The war resulted in significant damage to the countryside. Buildings were destroyed, farm fields

<sup>26</sup> Giorgio Giorgetti, *Contadini e proprietari nell'Italia moderna*, (Turin: 1974), as quoted in Origo, Livingston, Olin, and Dixon Hunt, *La Foce*, p. 23.

<sup>27</sup> See Carlo Severini, *La Mezzadria nel Regime Fascista. Discussioni sindacali e della Camera dei Deputati*, (Livorno: Soc. An. Officine Grafiche E. Pasquini, 1930) and Giorgio Mariani, *Il Problema Edilizio Rurale nei Poderi a Mezzadria della Pianura Bolognese*, (Bologna: Tipografia Luigi Parma, 1935). On sharecropping in the Pontine see Gentilcore, “Reclamation in the Agro Pontino, Italy”, p. 316.

<sup>28</sup> On the Origo farm see Origo, Livingston, Olin, and Dixon Hunt, *La Foce*.





**Cristiano Banti, *Three Peasant Women*, 73x34 cm., 1881, collection of the Gallery of Modern Art, the Pitti Palace, Florence** (Photo: Alinari AGC-F-000051-0000)

were mined, and entire villages were massacred as the Germans retreated northward through Italy during the summer and fall of 1944. Not surprisingly, an increasing number of the children of sharecroppers chose to leave the farms that their parents had previously worked<sup>29</sup>. Antonio Masi noted that within 10 years of the end of the war, many had left farms to find work in the city, in industrial or artisanal sectors. Prato and Grosseto grew without abandon. As Dario Gaggio reminds us, the Tuscan countryside was left without an agricultural base. Sharecropping families plummeted in size (to an average of 3.3 people by 1969)<sup>30</sup>. By 1981 20% of the buildings in the Province of Siena were abandoned. By 1956 a law went into effect allowing peasants to retire<sup>31</sup>. The peasant revolts of the mid to late 1940s only further solidified the obsolescence of the *mezzadria* system. And yet, by some accounts, the sharecropping system did not end until the 1970s. This in part explains how the parents of film star Roberto Begnini and Castiglion Fiorentino native, were illiterate. They were part of a system that was still vital when they were growing up after the war. Much of this is chronicled in Ber-

<sup>29</sup> On the demise of the sharecropper system see Victoria Belco, "Sharecroppers, War, and Social Change in Italy", *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 12 (4) 2007, pp. 397-405.

<sup>30</sup> Dario Gaggio "Selling Beauty. Tuscany's Rural Landscape Since 1945" in *The Cultural Wealth of Nations*, eds. Nina Bandelj and Frederick F. Wherry, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

<sup>31</sup> Fabrizio Nucci and Debora Pellegrinotti, *Mezzadria e sviluppo in Val di Bisenzio. La storia delle Fattorie Spranger e Del Bello (1844-1950)*, (Florence: Centro Editoriale Toscano, 1994), 208.





## Iris Origo Writes About The Merchant of Prato + Slaves

Familiar with the practice of sharecropping, and the horrors of servitude, Iris Origo wrote a foundational essay in 1955 about slavery in Renaissance Tuscany. It is one of the most comprehensive studies to date. In the Renaissance, slaves, whether Tartars, Russians, Greeks, Moors or Ethiopians, formed a significant portion of the population in Tuscany. They were maids and grooms, and worked the land. Adult and child slaves could be found in Florence as well as smaller Tuscan towns such as Lucca or Prato.

Origo reminds us that brides brought slaves as a part of their dowry, doctors accepted them in lieu of payment, and they were even

given as gifts. The slave market in Pisa was popular with well-to-do Tuscans.

Francesco di Marco Datini, the famous merchant of Prato whose biography Origo also wrote, was imaged in 1465 by Fra Filippo Lippi in the Prato Duomo wearing a red wool coat that purportedly cost more than a slave.

Datini had several slaves. He also traded slaves, insured them, and wrote about slave women being raped and impregnated. The correspondence of Datini and his agents is harrowing. As Origo notes “Slaves, whether captured or drowned, wounded or pregnant, were regarded merely as goods, whose value might increase or deteriorate”. Pregnancy was inconvenient. Fourteen percent of the foundlings brought to the Hospital of the Innocents in Florence had slave mothers. The fathers came from the most illustrious families in the city — the Adimari, Bardi, Capponi, Cerretani, Medici, Della Stufa, Pitti, Rucellai, Ridolfi, Salviati, Strozzi, Tornabuoni, and Vespucci.

**Titian (Tiziano Vecellio), *Laura Dianti*, ca. 1525. Oil on canvas, 118×93 cm. Kreuzlingen, Switzerland, Heinz Kisters Collection (Photo: Wikimedia Commons, The Yorck Project: 10.000 Meisterwerke der Malerei)**

*opposite*

**Armando Bruni, Fascist slogan painted on a farmhouse, 1930 (Photo: Alinari RCB-F-005791- 0000)**

W

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B





nardo Bertolucci's 1976 cinematic epic *Novecento*. Set in 1945 and the decades before, the film underscores the gross inequalities between the landed elite and the sharecroppers who work the land according to contractual agreements. By the 1960s huge numbers of shepherds from Sardinia were relocated to Tuscany to work the land in the absence of sufficient Tuscan workers. But this was not enough.





**Bistecca Fiorentina** (Photo: Cosimo Lipparini)

E

R

### **Bistecca alla Fiorentina Comes from the Land**

The English who settled in Florence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century introduced new cuts of beef to the Italian diet — one of which was the beefsteak, more commonly known as the *Bistecca alla Fiorentina*. The term is first recorded in 1823. The British had long been consumers of quickly seared big hunks of tender meat. Today the *bistecca* is the quintessential Tuscan food — grilled on an open fire, seared with rosemary, garlic, salt, olive oil and served rare. The bistecca comes from an Italian breed of cattle, known as the Chianina, raised in the Val di Chiana, located between Arezzo and Orvieto.



Tuscany is... serene and slow-paced  
(Candace Dempsey, [www.quora.com](http://www.quora.com), 2011)

R

Many believe that Tuscany embodies the essence of modern Italian cultural identity. Tuscany has long been considered to be the birthplace of *Italianità*. It is a region that boasts a plethora of native sons and sites: the birthplace of the great *condottieri*, literary figures, politicians, artists, and saints; and home to towns such as Florence, Siena, and San Gimignano. During unification, finalized in 1861, the rhetoric of nationalism drew heavily upon these Tuscan examples as a means of constructing a contemporary new nation rooted in a sense of shared collective history. This was propaganda disguised as history.

Celebratory centennial events helped establish a set of cultural heroes around whom a national history could be constructed. Dante, the first renowned author to write in the vernacular, was presented as the national poet. Michelangelo was promoted as Italy's principal artistic genius. Machiavelli was seen as the father of politics and Galileo of science. Celebrations took place in cities throughout the country for these cult figures. Florence held events to commemorate the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Galileo's birth in 1864, the sexcentary of Dante's birth in 1865<sup>1</sup>, the fourth centenary of Machiavelli's birth in 1869 and Michelangelo's birth in 1875<sup>2</sup>. Concurrent events were held in Ravenna, Rome and Venice underscoring the extent to which these native Tuscan sons had become nationally recognized<sup>3</sup>. In the process, Italy was rhetorically re-mapped with Tuscany at its center.

By the 1920s, the understanding of Tuscany as forming the core of Italian identity had been so thoroughly narrated that it remained largely unchallenged. Under PNF rule the importance of Tuscany was further magnified — undoubtedly facilitated by the fact that some of Mussolini's key ministers and advisors were Tuscan (Alessandro Pavolini, Lando Ferret-

<sup>1</sup> See Mary Bradford Whiting, "The Dante Sexcentenary of 1865", *Music & Letters*, vol. 2, no. 2 (April 1921), pp. 172-182, and Celsestin Hippeau, *L'Italie en 1865: souvenir d'une mission a Florence a l'occasion du 600e anniversaire de Dante*, (Caen: F. Le Blanc-Hardel, 1866).

<sup>2</sup> Stefano Corsi, ed., *Michelangelo nell'Ottocento. Il centenario el 1875*, (Milan: Edizione Charta 1994).

<sup>3</sup> Centenary events were held for Dante in Ravenna, Venice and Rome in 1865.



ti, Ugo Ojetti). There is no doubt that the celebration of *Romanità* was used to promote the regime's 20<sup>th</sup>-century imperialist visions. After all even Mussolini's moniker of Duce derived from the Latin *Dux*. But the celebration of *Italianità* remained equally important. The latter allowed the regime to promote a sense of a shared Italic culture and history that could, even if only temporarily, ameliorate strong regional divisions and identities (the famous *campanalismo*) in favor of supporting a newly strengthened central government. Within this context the canon of Italian cultural heroes and heritage sites was paraded before the public and made accessible in unprecedented ways: through the media of festivals, scholarship, film, tourism, restoration projects, and more.

When the Italian National Fascist Party, or PNF, seized power in 1922, they promoted the notion that they had inherited a country that was weak and degenerate — ruined by the liberal reforms of the previous government of Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti. As a consequence the rhetorical strategies of much PNF propaganda emphasized the strength, discipline, order, and masculine authority of the new leadership. The nasty politics of Fascist ordered murders were brushed aside.

Within this framework *condottieri* such as the Tuscans Francesco Ferrucci and Giovanni delle Bande Nere were put forth as models of superior virility and courage and often imaged in tandem with Mussolini on horseback in the guise of a modern-day condottiero. Other men on horseback were conveniently ignored in favor of these *condottieri* — men who ironically had little legitimate power. The prose of poets Dante and Petrarch was promoted as a defining moment in the definition of the Italian language, and Mussolini took up Dante's dream of a united Italy as his own. The political acumen of Machiavelli and Lorenzo the Magnificent was cited as having laid the foundations for modern politics; the *oeuvre* of artists such as Piero della Francesca and Benozzo Gozzoli was celebrated as unsurpassed genius to be compared with contemporary figures such as Mario Sironi; saints such as Catherine of Siena and Fina of San Gimignano were praised for their unparalleled compassion and good works (something that every good Fascist should aspire to); festivals such as the Sieneese *palio* and the Florentine *gioco al calcio* were interpreted as the vestigial demonstrations of once powerful civic bodies now reborn under Fascism, and communal-era cities of Florence, Siena, and San Gimignano were seen as examples of political innovation and impressive urban planning — the latter being a discipline that was professionalized during the regime.

While similar examples from other regions were occasionally put forth (the celebration of St. Francis of Assisi as an exemplar of abstinence and self-sacrifice is one of the more successful cases), the exempla of Tuscany prevailed. PNF cultural leaders celebrated this





**Ottone Rosai, *Case di Villamagna*, located in the Stazione Santa Maria Novella, Florence, 1935.**  
**The panel painting was one of two commissioned by architect Giovanni Michelucci for the station**  
 (Photo: George Tatge, reproduced with permission of the Grandi Stazioni, Gruppo Ferrovie dello Stato)

past as evidence of the cultural domination and prowess of the Italic race. This was an *Italianità* that was carefully designed to complement rather than compete with the imperialist celebration of *Romanità*. Christian *condottieri* fighting to save the Italian peninsula, leaders of the independent city-states, and tyrannical dukes were in many ways the national counterparts to the Imperial emperors and heroes of ancient Rome.

The regime's interest in Tuscany is largely indebted to the foundational myths of late 19<sup>th</sup>-century nationalism, it also shares rhetoric with the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century ideal of *Toscanità* and the cultural movement of *Strapaese* (hyper-country), centered in Tuscany and to a lesser extent in Emilia Romagna beginning in the mid-1920s. *Toscanità* was an aesthetic and nationalistic celebration of rural peasant life and natural beauty promoted by Ardegno Soffici and other members of the Florentine avant-garde<sup>4</sup>. Soffici's mission was to include Tuscany within "the range of cultures represented in the international avant-garde" and celebrate the traditional culture in modern terms<sup>5</sup>. Adherents of *Strapaese*, a term coined in the

<sup>4</sup> On *Strapaese* and *Il Selvaggio* see Luisa Mangoni, *L'Interventismo della Cultura. Intellettuali e riviste del fascismo*, (Bari: Laterza, 1974), pp. 136-195.

<sup>5</sup> Walter Adamson, "Ardegno Soffici and the Religion of Art", in Matthew Affron and Mark Antliff, eds., *Fascist Vi-*





Ottone Rosai, *Campagna Toscana*, located in the Stazione Santa Maria Novella, Florence, 1935. This was the second painting commissioned by architect Giovanni Michelucci for the dining room of the station (Photo: George Tatge, reproduced with permission of the Grandi Stazioni, Gruppo Ferrovie dello Stato)

journal *Il Selvaggio* in 1926, in turn sought to strengthen a Fascist culture that was rooted in traditional Italian rural values — “Catholicism, ruralism, classicism, realism, hierarchy, authority”<sup>6</sup>. The *Strapaese* journal *Il Selvaggio*, founded by the critic and caricaturist Mino Maccari in 1925 in Colle Val D’Elsa (and continued after several relocations until 1943)<sup>7</sup>, featured the work of artists known as the Gruppo Selvaggio, which included Soffici, Ottone Rosai, Romano Romanelli, and Giorgio Morandi as well as the prose of writers and cultural critics such as Curzio Malaparte (who went on to found the influential journal *Prospettive*), Piero Bargellini, Mario Tinti and Giovanni Papini. Borrowing heavily from the Futurists each argued against the threat of bourgeois foreign culture — particularly the threatening Americanization of Italian culture, which was well un-

sions. *Art and Ideology in France and Italy*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 50.

<sup>6</sup> See Mino Maccari, “Gazzettino Ufficiale di Strapaese”, *il Selvaggio*, December 15, 1927, p. 89.

<sup>7</sup> *Il Selvaggio* moved to Florence in 1925, Siena in 1929, Turin in 1931, and Rome in 1932. The journal ceased publication in 1943. Both Adamson, “Ardegno Soffici”, and Emily Braun, “Speaking Volumes: Giorgio Morandi’s Still Lives and the Cultural Politics of Strapaese”, *Modernism/Modernity*, 2.3 (1995) 89-116 provide excellent overviews of the journal and the players involved.



der way by the late 1920s<sup>8</sup>. And they did so in the particular format of the “journal” — printed bi-weekly as a folio format newspaper complete with lino-block engravings and typeface. Orco Bisorco (a pseudonym for Mino Maccari) wrote in the journal in 1927, *Strapaese* was

created to defend with drawn sword the rural and village character of the Italian people... Italian culture and mentality that is preserved in our pure traditions... Strapaese was erected as a bulwark against the invasions of foreign fashions and ideas, and modernist culture<sup>9</sup>.

*Strapaese* “bemoaned the attrition of regional customs and identity”<sup>10</sup>, or what Maccari defined as “the most genuine and pure expression of the race”<sup>11</sup>. In their efforts to promote regionalism the adherents to the *Strapaese* movement were in dialogue with projects elsewhere, including the WPA program to photograph rural architecture in the United States.

Within this framework, Soffici extolled Tuscan peasants and their supposed love of the land, and had the audacity to regard their poverty as a form of willed anti-materialism<sup>12</sup>. The vision of the rural as presented by Soffici and others helped to identify fascism with rural life, and the “unpretentious character of small town inhabitants”<sup>13</sup>. “Soffici’s synthesis of nationalism, modernism and Volkish regionalism ... led him to celebrate the idea of *Toscanità* as a sign of ... regeneration. Soffici’s peasants symbolized all he conceived as enduring in Italian culture”<sup>14</sup>. Within this rhetoric, the Tuscan farmhouse received particular attention.

Rosai, an ardent Fascist (a squadrista and active member of the Florence fascist party), was based in Florence publishing essays and illustrations in *Il Selvaggio* and elsewhere. Rosai’s rural scenes — whether depictions of villages or farm complexes — drew attention to the “simplicity and honesty”<sup>15</sup> of the Tuscan countryside, its architecture and people. According to Mario Tinti, Rosai’s illustrations for Tinti’s 1934 book *L’Architettura delle case coloniche in Toscana*, captured the “autochthonous and universal character” of the Tuscan farmhouse<sup>16</sup>. The two large panel paintings he produced for the new Florence train station, at the request of architect Giovanni Michelucci, underscores this point.

The village scene (*Case di Villamagna*) comprised a series of muted geometric forms that

<sup>8</sup> Braun has pointed out that the very design of *Il Selvaggio*, with its use of 19<sup>th</sup>-century style topography, woodcuts and intaglio methods, underscored artisan traditions threatened by mass media, “Speaking Volumes”, p. 97. Victoria de Grazia has charted the American branding of Europe in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in *Irresistible Empire. America’s Advance Through 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Europe*, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).

<sup>9</sup> Orco Bisorco “Gazzettino ufficiale di strapaese” *Il Selvaggio*, April 15, 1927, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Braun, “Speaking Volumes”, p. 92.

<sup>11</sup> Bisorco “Gazzettino” *Il Selvaggio*, April 15, 1927, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> On Soffici see Adamson, “Soffici”, and “The Culture of Italian Fascism”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, October 1995, pp. 555-575.

<sup>13</sup> Braun, “Speaking Volumes”, p. 105.

<sup>14</sup> Mark Antliff, “Fascism, Modernism, Modernity”, *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 84, 1, 2002, pp. 148-169, p. 158.

<sup>15</sup> Luigi Cavallo, *Ottone Rosai*, (Milan: Mazzotta, 1995) p. 311.

<sup>16</sup> Tinti *L’architettura delle case*, p. 22.



were simultaneously simple, un-ornamented, and anonymous. Not surprisingly Rosai's paintings were owned by leading members of the *Strapaese* movement (including Giovanni Papini and Soffici), as well as ardent Fascists such as Alessandro Pavolini and the publisher Attilio Vallecchi<sup>17</sup>.

*Strapaese* adherents condemned what member Malaparte coined as *Stracittà* — “the bourgeoisie ideals fashionable in Paris, London and New York”<sup>18</sup>. The criticism extended to “Rationalist architecture and the internationalist aesthetics of the novecento”<sup>19</sup> — the pan-European modernist Rationalist architecture espoused by Le Corbusier and his followers as well as the 20<sup>th</sup>-century neoclassicism advocated by the influential Marcello Piacentini among others<sup>20</sup>. Such movements were seen as seeking to impose “foreign culture, decadent cosmopolitanism, and bourgeois values on the indigenous authentic culture of rural Italy”. According to Soffici,

the inhabitants [of Italian cities] are witness to the most shameless architectural barbarism and disrespect for the beauty and harmony of its piazze, streets, and dear and significant places, so sacrificed to the triumph of bad taste, mercantilism, and garish vulgarity.

Soffici noted, “Milan, Bologna, Florence and Rome provided memorable examples of such profanity and indignation”<sup>21</sup>. There was simply an overabundance of cosmopolitan culture in the city. For Soffici, it was time for Italy to break from the influence of foreign cultural hegemony and re-cultivate its own historic values<sup>22</sup>. It was time to redefine modernity in native Italian terms.

A visit to Florence in 1910 introduced the Bolognese Giorgio Morandi to Piero della Francesca, Masaccio and others — encouraging him to concentrate on still lives that are marked by geometric structures and subtle tonalities. Morandi's work, which appeared in *Il Selvaggio*, was defined by its “honesty, simplicity, and sobriety” and celebration of ordinary, everyday objects<sup>23</sup>. As Emily Braun has noted, Morandi's renditions of everyday objects underscored that he “had no need of Paris, and looked no further than his own backyard... for inspiration”<sup>24</sup>. Although Morandi admired Cézanne and Picasso, he had little need of the cosmopolitan sophistication of the city. The celebration of simple life, ordi-

<sup>17</sup> For the owners of numerous paintings see Alfonso Gatto, *Ottone Rosai*, (Florence: Vallecchi, 1941).

<sup>18</sup> Curzio Malaparte “Strapaese a Stracittà”, *Il Selvaggio*, November 10, 1927, p. 79.

<sup>19</sup> Antliff, “Fascism, Modernism, Modernity”, p. 158.

<sup>20</sup> Diane Yvonne Ghirardo, “Italian Architects and Fascist Politics: An Evaluation of the Rationalist's Role in Regime Building” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 39, no. 2 (May, 1980) pp. 109-127, p. 112.

<sup>21</sup> Ardegno Soffici, “Allarme” *Il Selvaggio*, April 1-14, 1926, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Adamson, “The Culture of Italian Fascism”, p. 564.

<sup>23</sup> Braun, “Speaking Volumes”, p. 107.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*



nary routines and unassuming people coupled with a rejection of the European and American avant-garde, securely rooted artists such as Morandi, Rosai, and Soffici in native local traditions<sup>25</sup>. The movement “fiercely opposed itself to the avant-garde aesthetics and internationalism of European modernism”. In fact, for its first ten years, *Il Selvaggio* refrained from publishing works of foreign artists<sup>26</sup>.

The *Strapaese* movement had a conflicted relationship with the PNF. Initially the government embraced ideas of both *Stracittà* and *Strapaese*. Maccari felt that the regime had “betrayed the original ideals of the Fascist revolution and sought to be a moral corrective within the increasingly rigid and hypocritical machine of the state”<sup>27</sup>. Maccari was even expelled from the PNF (and subsequently reinstated) while issues of *il Selvaggio* were censored. That said, by the 1930s, as the government became increasingly drawn to supporting a policy of economic autonomy, it became clear that goals of *Strapaese*’s cultural autarchy “complemented the Fascist agenda”<sup>28</sup>. In the process *Strapaese* rhetoric cleverly masked economic hardships brought on by both the Great Depression and expenditures of colonial adventures. The tenor of *Strapaese*, with its “aesthetic politics based on nationalism rather than internationalism” and the promotion of an indigenous, anti-bourgeoisie culture, provided an excellent foundation for that self-sufficiency which sought to reorient Italian consumers towards the appreciation and consumption of native Italy. Foreign culture, and in particular Americanism, was seen as a challenge to both Italian national and cultural autonomy. Ironically the government drew upon the very rhetoric that at times had accused it of being too foreign, too cosmopolitan, too bourgeois. Such irony underscores the extent to which self-sufficiency marked a shift in Italian culture in the mid 1930s. The aspects of foreign culture that had once been considered to be fashionable, important, and appropriate, became threatening. And the ideal of rural Tuscany was acknowledged as integral to constructing an articulated image of native national culture<sup>29</sup>.

Interest in rural Italy was not exclusive to Tuscany. The 1936 Sixth Triennale of Architecture held in Milan demonstrated that there were interesting vernacular typologies located throughout the peninsula and its islands. There were also important publications such as Roberto Pane’s well received 1936 *Architettura rurale campa-*

<sup>25</sup> Adamson, “The Culture of Italian Fascism”, p. 567.

<sup>26</sup> As Braun has observed, ironically the journal began to publish works by foreign artists at the outset of autarchy. See “Speaking Volumes”.

<sup>27</sup> Braun, “Speaking Volumes”, p. 99.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>29</sup> The *Strapaese* movement did not condemn modernism and modernity outright but instead sought to reconcile aspects of modern technology and avant gardism with an adherence to tradition as a means of maintaining regional differences. See Braun “Speaking Volumes”, p. 98.





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### **Piero della Francesca Inspires Painters**

Today Piero della Francesca is the subject of a commune-sponsored promotional project in which a large-scale facsimile of Piero's paintings adorns the wall of the entrance to Arezzo's new parking garage. Dotting the Tuscan and Umbrian landscape Piero's paintings are also the subjects of the so-called Piero trail in which eager art enthusiasts follow in the painter's footsteps as if he were the redeemer.

An exception to the foreign domination of the Renaissance in Tuscany is the work of the Tuscan resident art historian Roberto Longhi (1890-1970), who was the author of several books including a monograph on Piero in 1927. Longhi was a contemporary of Bernard Berenson — although the two men did not agree — and certainly not on Piero whom Berenson dismissed as impassive and unemotional.

Piero's Arezzo frescos in the apse of San Francesco figure prominently in Longhi's work. The fact that they have remained in situ no doubt helped. Longhi put forth Piero as revolutionary, even claiming that Piero was a precursor of Cézanne and Seurat. As such the Renaissance painter was complicit in Modernism — made even more possible by the fact that Piero copies were on display at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris.

Longhi established the agenda for Piero studies — a focus on Piero's use of perspective and color. He also remapped Italian art history by focusing on an Italian primitive. With Longhi's study of Piero, attention was paid to an Italian artist by an Italian historian. In so doing Longhi followed in the footsteps of Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle, Giovanni Morelli, Adolfo + Lionello Venturi and Corrado Ricci. Of all these, it is perhaps Longhi that has been most successfully ignored by Anglo-American scholarship.



During the 1920s and 1930s, there was a renewed interest in mural and fresco painting. Schools such as the *Istituto d'Arte* in Siena (1928) and the *Scuola Artigiana d'Oltrarno Leonardo da Vinci* in Florence were founded with government support to provide a place where traditional techniques such as fresco painting could be studied in an environment that emulated the medieval apprentice system. These schools were similar to Germany's famous Bauhaus (1919-1933), where fine arts and craft were taught together.

Artists such as Mario Sironi, who promoted mural painting, frequently received large government commissions. Sironi studied Piero della Francesca as his contemporaries turned to other fresco painters — Carlo Carrà looked at Giotto while Ottone Rosai studied Masaccio. In 1933 Sironi collaborated with Carrà and others to produce the *Manifesto della Pittura Murale* a treatise on mural painting that underscored the social and educational value of large-scale public art projects, which by their very nature were situated within architecture.

Their manifesto seemed to quote the politically charged rationale behind the work of Mexican muralists Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros of the previous decade. In many ways it was a precursor to the 1935 creation of the WPA's division of the Federal Arts Project, which oversaw the creation of murals by artists such as Stuart Davis and Jackson Pollock. The renewed interest in Italian frescoes by Giotto, Gozzoli and Piero during the regime needs to be understood within this context. It was a part of an international trend reflecting interest in large scale public art.

The frescoes of Giotto received particular attention. Ardegno Soffici and Carlo Carrà looked to Giotto for inspiration for pictorial traditions. Giotto's simple buildings constituted a celebration of native architecture. So the resurgence of interest in Giotto was at once an interest in vernacular architecture and fresco traditions. Although Ottone Rosai's paintings of peasant landscapes and Tuscan villages commissioned by Michellucci for the Santa Maria Train Station are not frescoes, there is something Giottesque about them. In other words, they might not have been possible without a renewed interest in Giotto.

Their choice was not novel. The Scrovegni Chapel in Padua and the Bardi and Peruzzi chapels in Florence had been popular destinations for bourgeois tourists for decades, the Giotto frescos in the church of San Francesco in Assisi were too far afield. Hawthorne, who went to Assisi, was exceptional. It was not until the 1932 documentary by filmmaker Alessandro Blasetti (*Assisi*) and the restoration efforts of the town's podestà Arnaldo Fortini (beginning in 1923) that Assisi and Giotto in Assisi was reclaimed for the Italian consumer. Similar to the way in which the fresco cycle of Benozzo Gozzoli in the church of San Agostino in San Gimignano was featured in Raffaello Pacidi's 1941 film *San Gimignano dalle Belle torri*, the contemporary Italian was taught a renewed appreciation for Italian mural cycles in Italian towns.



na that promoted rural culture with regional emphasis<sup>30</sup>. Architect Luigi Piccina to even studied vernacular architecture in the Italian colonies as a means of informing new colonial construction<sup>31</sup>. But there was something particular to the Tuscan situation that made its promotion well suited to PNF rhetoric. The pattern of historic agronomy practices in Tuscany was distinct from other regions in Italy. The Tuscan (and to a certain extent the Umbrian and Marchian) agricultural practices were characterized by “disordered mixed cultivation”<sup>32</sup> practices (Antonio Masi tells us that corn, olives, wheat, beans and other vegetables were grown on the land his father worked in the 1930s). Densely planted fields bordered by hedges, trees, or shrubs constituted what is known as the *alberata*. Renaissance painters and poets alike did a great deal to cultivate the picturesque image of the Tuscan “bel paesaggio” with its irregular fields and varied crops<sup>33</sup>. Emilio Sereni points out that this seemingly natural landscape was distinct from the artificial pastures predominant in northern Italy. The so-called *piantata* of Lombardy, the Po River Valley, and Veneto was defined by square level fields bounded by ditches, embankments, canals, and sluiceways for irrigation and straight roads. This highly ordered land use constituted what one Tuscan writer referred to as the “violence done to ...nature”<sup>34</sup>. Such “violence” was already in place by the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century thanks to an advanced understanding of agronomy, crop rotation, and irrigation. As a result the plains were systematized and rationalized<sup>35</sup>. As Dianne Harris has shown, this scientific approach to the agriculture remained in effect through the 18<sup>th</sup> century as the system of canals and waterways facilitating irrigation and navigation was enhanced<sup>36</sup>. The Hapsburg cadastral mapping project in Lombardy further put forth the idea of a regularized landscape. Of the two landscapes, the Tuscan countryside emerged as the more commonly depicted. Its picturesque qualities became familiar and perhaps because of this by the 1930s rural Tuscany was more readily inscribed within the rhetoric of rural culture associated with a free, honest, hard working, productive *popolo* seeking to contribute to the health and wealth of a nation. How else can we explain the irony that the ra-

<sup>30</sup> Roberto Pane's *Architettura rurale campana* (Florence: Rinascimento del Libro, 1936) was reviewed positively in *Architettura*, June 1936, p. 291.

<sup>31</sup> See Fuller, *Moderns Abroad*, pp. 121-122.

<sup>32</sup> Emilio Sereni, *History of the Italian Agricultural Landscape*, translated with an introduction by R. Burr Litchfield, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 369.

<sup>33</sup> Sereni cites the work of Lorenzetti, Botticelli and Gozzoli *History of the Italian Agricultural Landscape*, p. 101 as well as the 13<sup>th</sup>-century poet Folgore da San Gimignano, p. 89.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>36</sup> Dianne Harris, *The Nature of Authority. Villa Culture, Landscape, and Representation in Eighteenth-Century Lombardy* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2003), pp. 9-11.



tionalized system of the Po River valley and Lombardy is not the landscape privileged by the Rationalist architects?

During the 1930s, the vernacular architecture of rural Tuscany became an important part of the curriculum at the architecture school at the University of Florence. The school was eager to distinguish itself from the other recently formed schools of architecture — namely Rome (founded in 1919), Turin (founded in 1929) and Milan (founded shortly after Florence in 1933)<sup>37</sup>. A way to do this was through the study of regional vernacular architectural traditions and the creation of a narrative in which the vernacular could emerge as inspiration for modern design. Tinti observed in 1934, Tuscany had the greatest variety of *case coloniche* of all of Italy<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> For an overview of the various architecture schools see Paolo Nicoloso, *Gli architetti di Mussolini. Scuole e sindacato, architetti e massoni, professori e politici negli anni del regime* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 1999). Prior to the formation of the professional architecture schools there were of course numerous places where architecture could be studied such as the Naples Accademia di Belle Arti.

<sup>38</sup> Tinti *L'architettura delle case*, p. 8.



# **Fascist Constructions**







Florence  
decorated  
for Adolf  
Hitler's visit  
in 1938  
(Photo: Life  
Magazine)

I

On April 25 1945 Mussolini was captured. He was disguised in a German military helmet and trench coat, driving an Alfa Romeo. He was trying to flee Milan where he had been under house arrest. The 61-year old former dictator was executed by his Partisan captors along with his 33-year old mistress Clara Petacci and 14 loyal Fascists. Among those killed was the Florentine Alessandro Pavolini, who held many positions within the party including Minister of Popular Culture.

Mussolini's body was hung upside down along with Petacci, Pavolini and others from the metal girders of a gas station before a large crowd gathered in the Piazza Loreto in Milan. This was the same place where 15 Milanese Partisans has been killed the year before. Since July of 1943 and the successful Allied invasion of Southern Italy, Mussolini had been removed from power by the Italian high command and King Victor Emmanuel III. By September of that year the Germans had installed Mussolini as the head of the Republic of Salò, a Nazi puppet state in German-occupied northern Italy. By April of 1945 the Third Reich was losing its grip on northern Italy and its stronghold in Milan. Mussolini was killed two days before Hitler's suicide.

While Mussolini was despised at the end of his life, this was not always the case. Until the start of the Italo-Abyssinian war in 1935 Mussolini was much admired in the US and elsewhere. In 1923 the *New York Times* compared the prime minister to George Washington. In 1928 Charles Scribner's Sons translated his autobiography — which was also serialized in *The Saturday Evening Post*. The American ambassador to Italy referred to the Duce as a man of "permanent greatness". He was on the cover of *Time* magazine in August 1923 and again several times through June 1943. His cover appearance was an honor he shared with Henri Matisse, Mahatma Ghandi and Gertrude Stein. Even President Roosevelt praised Mussolini, noting in 1933 that he "was deeply impressed by what he (Mussolini) has accomplished". Business leaders were also largely favorable — singing Mussolini's praises in the *Wall Street Journal* and *Fortune* magazine. The PNF was even compared to the American Legion. The 1934 Cole Porter hit "You're The Top" written for the musical *Anything Goes* originally in-





**Mussolini on the cover of *Time* Magazine, July 20, 1936**  
(Photo: *Time Magazine*)

cluded the line "You're the tops — you're Muss-o-li-ni". Along with a Waldorf salad, Mickey Mouse and the Mona Lisa, Mussolini was considered the best. All this changed in 1935 when Italy invaded Ethiopia and became increasingly allied with Germany. By 1941 Mussolini had declared war against the US. Shortly after his death, members of the Italian public sought to erase his memory. Statues were toppled and lictor rods which had been applied to buildings were removed. Yet many Fascist-era buildings remained throughout Tuscany — in Arezzo, Siena, Florence and elsewhere.

One of the things that Mussolini did during PNF rule was to reclaim the curation of Italian culture. This is chronicled in Franco Zeffirelli's 1999 film *Tea with Mussolini* which narrates the activities of a group of Anglo-American women in Florence during the Fascist era. The group of women meet for tea daily

at 4pm. They worship art, and Tuscany provides the perfect backdrop for the film with scenes shot in Fiesole, San Gimignano, at Tuscan villas, and numerous sites in Florence including Elizabeth Barrett Browning's grave in the English Cemetery, the Caffé Doney on the via Tornabuoni, and the Gipsoteque of the Accademia where students are being instructed in the art of drawing surrounded by the 19<sup>th</sup>-century plaster casts by Lorenzo Bartolini.

In one scene the ladies sit in the Uffizi having tea. As they are comfortably settled beneath Botticelli and da Vinci paintings, reading the English paper, one woman paints a copy of the *Primavera*. Fascist Black Shirts come in and throw the women out — tossing their tea service along with the Botticelli copy through the window. In so doing they physically mark the Italian reclamation of stewardship of Italian culture.

This is an important moment in the movie. The city, and its history, had long been curated by foreigners — particularly Anglo-Americans. They wrote influential histories and guidebooks, and paid for restoration projects. They were educated and leisured consumers of the city. By throwing the Anglo-Americans and their tea service out of the Uffizi, the PNF not only reclaimed Italy for Italians, but reclaimed it for the working classes. Throwing the foreigners out of the Uffizi was just the beginning of this cultural reclamation.



Firenze's Santa Maria Novella was among the most architecturally significant recent buildings of any Italian railway station  
([www.GrandiStazioni.it](http://www.GrandiStazioni.it), 2016)

T

M

The Florence train station, like the dozens of stations built during the 1930s, reflected how the regime overhauled the train network. Under the direction of Costanzo Ciano, director of the newly formed Ministry of Communications (founded in 1924), the government built new post and telegraph (PTT) buildings, summer colonies for children and train stations in towns and cities throughout Italy. New train lines were laid, and some of these boasted new direct service (*la diretissima*) allowing people to travel more quickly from Florence to Bologna and Rome to Naples. In 1936 the ETR 200 was launched, the first electric train ensuring high speed travel.

In order to court favor with the public, make them feel as though they were living in a dynamic nation and ensure that they used the trains, the government issued discount tickets for special events such as the *palio*, and beginning in 1931 organized all day excursions for workers. The latter often entailed visiting a town or spending a day in the country as featured in the 1933 film *Treno Popolare* directed by Raffaello Matarazzo and partially shot on the Florence-Rome line. As in the film, the *treni popolari* meant that many travelled by train for the first time. By 1934 more than a million people were participating in the organized train excursions which took place on Sundays and holidays during the summer months. Tickets for the special all day trips were typically reduced by as much as 80%. Trips usually were underway by 7 am and completed by midnight. While the trains were designated “popular”, only those who had access to a train or worked where at locales where there were sanctioned holidays, could participate. Although it was extensive, train tourism of this kind did not serve the rural farm worker<sup>1</sup>.

Many of the new train stations, such as those built in Venice or Florence, were highly publicized projects. Many were designed by Angiolo Mazzoni (1894-1979), the chief architect

<sup>1</sup> On the *treni popolari* see Stefano Maggi, *Le ferrovie* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2003), pp. 189-191.





**Frame enlargement from *Treno Popolare*, 1933 film**

for the Ministero delle Comunicazione from 1924-1940. He designed new stations in Rome, Venice, Trento, Messina, Bolzano, Reggio Emilia, and Reggio Calabria as well the smaller stations in the Tuscan towns of Siena (1933-1935 where his parents were from) and Montecatini Terme (1933-1937). These stations were sites of exploration where art, architecture and a newly fashioned tourist behavior were on display. Mazzoni designed the graphic language for signage as well as furniture used by those passing through the station — aerodynamic ticket booths, benches, and water fountains, waiting rooms for passengers, streamlined canopies that hovered over the tracks, clocks, and arrival and departure boards. Because of his focused productivity Mazzoni emerged as the period's leading designer of train stations. In many of his projects he collaborated with Futurist artists who designed mosaic friezes and paintings for some waiting rooms.

Mazzoni was initially assigned the task of designing the Florence train station and did so with 4 different neo-historicist schemes intended to dialogue with the city's Renaissance masterpieces. The Florentine intellectual Roberto Papini chose the project that was to be perfected and this in turn was approved by the Florentine Authority in 1931. The design, however, proved to be controversial in the popular press. In an attempt to ameliorate the situation the Ministry of Communications then held a competition for the station's design in 1933. This was judged by Italy's preeminent authorities on architecture (Cesare Balsani, Cesare Udone, Romano Romanelli, Ugo Ojetti, Giovanni Pa-

**opposite  
Poster  
advertising the  
August 16th,  
1937 Palio  
which had been  
redesigned in  
1928  
(Collection of the  
Archivio Storico  
del Comune di  
Siena)**



pini, F. T. Marinetti, Marcello Piacentini, and Armando Brassini) and won by the young, inexperienced and unknown *Gruppo Toscano*, consisting of students from the Florence Architecture school — Nello Baroni (1906-1958) and Pier Niccolò Berardi (1904-1989), their classmates Italo Gamberini, Sarre Guarnieri, and Leonardo Lusanna — as well as their teacher Giovanni Michellucci. The station was built in Florence between 1932 and 1935. The winning design was both modern and vernacular. Its streamlined simplicity, austerity, and very choice of materials (the use of *pietra forte* and other colored marbles) was local. As such the building was in conversation with modern architecture elsewhere in Italy as well as the vernacular architecture of Tuscany. In the end Mazzoni's involvement in the project was limited to designing the adjacent heating plant and the building housing the railroad switches and control tower, as well as some furniture located inside the station.

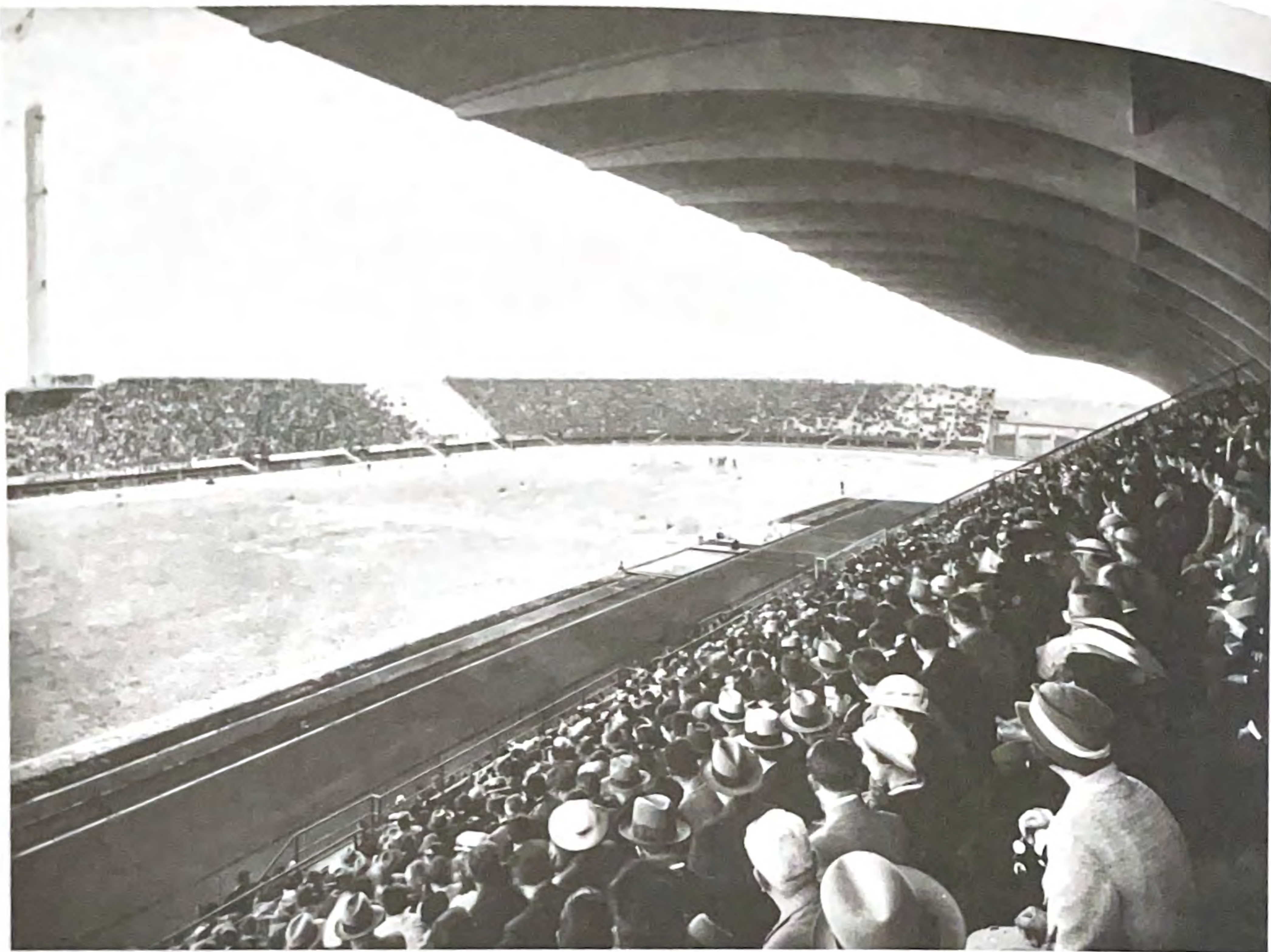
The station was one of two major modern buildings in the city of Florence. The other was the Stadio Comunale (built in 1931 and since renamed) designed by the engineer Pier Luigi Nervi to seat 37,000 soccer spectators. Both structures were unlike anything else built to date in Florence. The buildings were severe. They were aggressive in their display of new materials (glass and steel in the case of the station and reinforced concrete in the case of the stadium). Each was daring — both in formal and technological terms. Both eschewed historicist language. And neither had a façade in the traditional sense. Moreover, these two modern and modernist buildings were consummate period spaces designed to facilitate mass movement and spectacle — and in that way were Fascist.

By recasting vernacular architecture within a modernist sensibility, the Gruppo Toscano was able to enter into contemporary architectural debate and in the process ensure that Florence was a player within the Modernist arena. Long celebrated for its medieval and Renaissance past, Florence in the 1930s found itself among the varied discourses on Italian architecture. During the regime there was “considerable diversity...between different groups of Italian architects and within the groups themselves”<sup>2</sup>. These included moderates who advocated for



<sup>2</sup> Chirardo, "Italian Architects and Fascist Politics", p. 112.





PS

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**Pier Luigi Nervi, Stadio Artemio Franchi, Florence, c. 1932, formerly the Stadio Comunale G. Berta**  
(Photo: Alinari CDP-S-MAL517-0231)

### Nervi Stadium

In 1931 Pier Luigi Nervi (1891-1979) designed a sports stadium in the Campo di Marte neighborhood of northern Florence using reinforced concrete — a material that could be molded into any geometric shape. It was named after the Fascist martyr Giovanni Bertà (a young Florentine killed in 1921 by a group of supposed anarchists and subsequently proclaimed a martyr by the PNF), who was ceremoniously buried in the Sacrario in the crypt of Santa Croce. The stadium was financed and inaugurated by the PNF, with the advocacy of the local Fascist Party Secretary Alessandro Pavolini.

The stadium construction was innovative — with an elliptical staircase, imposing 70-meter tall “Marathon tower” which bore the stadium’s flag, and canopy which seemed to float without any view-obstructing supports — and attracted attention from both critics and the public in Italy and abroad. Raffaello Brizzi and Giovanni Michelucci were among many who sang its praises. The stadium was built to accommodate more than 37,000 spectators. It is no surprise that Nervi has come to be known as one of the most brilliant designers of reinforced concrete in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His buildings, publications and talks (he gave the Norton lectures at Harvard in 1961-2) are renowned.



The Florence stadium was a perfected version of the Bologna Littoriale stadium of 1926. Like the Littoriale, the Florence stadium was an enclosed ellipse with a regulation-length running track encircling a playing field. The stadium was inaugurated by a soccer game in which the ball was dropped from an airplane flown by the Florentine acrobatic pilot Vasco Magrini. When it was built, at the height of the Fascist regime, the government promoted sporting events as mass entertainment and in so doing reclaimed what had been a middle-class and elite activity. Sport was also a way for the regime to promote physical fitness, discipline and efficiency. In addition to the new stadia built throughout the country the government trained gym teachers — a new idea at the time. Beginning in 1928 a training ground was set up in Rome for male sports instructors. A parallel academy for women was established in Orvieto in 1932. By 1936 there were 14,000 sports instructors in the country.

Much of the sports activities were the responsibility of the ONB — the Opera Nazionale Balilla founded in 1925 to oversee physical education for school-age children. By the fall of 1936, there were more than 5.5 million members in the ONB, all of whom participated in physical education as a mass event. By 1937 the GIL (Gioventù italiana del Littorio) replaced the ONB and expanded membership to youth up to 21 years of age. That year 7.542 million were members.

In 1925 the regime launched the OND, a government run leisure time organization with chapters associated with the workplace. By 1933 there were over 19,000 chapters promoting non-competitive activities. For many, the OND chapter provided the only access to entertainment and leisure, including sports.

Sports remained a largely urban young male activity throughout the 1920s and 1930s. By the 1930s only about 100,000 women had access to sporting facilities and activities. And in rural areas there was a chronic shortage of sports facilities.

Nonetheless, sporting events were popular. The self-abnegating athlete provided an excellent role model in a time when there was not much to eat. And mass gatherings provided a way to promote both the body beautiful and the making of new Italians. Italy enjoyed sporting successes in late '20's and first half of '30's including 12 gold medals at the 1932 Olympics (second only to the US), World Cup soccer wins in 1934 and 1938 and the Olympic soccer title in 1936. Sports proved to be a way to forget contemporary anxieties.

Athletes were also understood to be important ambassadors abroad. Mussolini was no exception. Photographed skiing, swimming, riding horses, piloting planes, and driving sport cars, the athletic Mussolini was a way to promote recreational sporting activities.

In 1991 the Stadio Bertà was renamed after Artemio Franchi, the Florentine born former president of the European Football (soccer) Union (UEFA) — conveniently erasing the stadium's Fascist history as it continues to be the site of sporting events.





**Santa Maria Novella train station, Florence, from *Architettura*, April 1936, cover**

**opposite**  
**Santa Maria Novella train station, Florence**  
(Photo: courtesy of Scott Gilchrist, Archivision)

a kind of streamlined neo-classicism — the prolific critic and designer Piacentini in Rome as well as the *Novecento* group in Milan with members like Giovanni Muzio and Giò Ponti. There were also conservative academics such as the outspoken and influential art critic Ugo Ojetti. And of course there were the avant-garde Rationalists such as the Gruppo 7 based in Milan, Gino Levi-Montalcini, Giuseppe Pagano, Edoardo Persico and Alberto Sartoris practicing in Turin, as well as Pietro Aschieri, Adalberto Libera, and Giuseppe Capponi in Rome<sup>3</sup>. Of these individuals, Piacentini emerged as a key spokesman and collaborator, often working with members of all constituencies in his dual capacity as master planner — he was responsible for the Città Universitaria (1932-35) and E42/Esp

sizione Universale di Roma (1938-1942), both in Rome — and director of the influential *Architettura e arti decorative*, the journal of the National Syndicate of Fascist Architects<sup>4</sup>. Thus, by arguing that the tradition of modernist architecture was rooted within the Tuscan vernacular, the young Tuscan rationalists of the Gruppo Toscano parlayed the region's historical roots into the essential ingredient of the Italian modernist rhetoric. In their mind the modern was rooted in tradition, a tradition that was distinctly Tuscan. Gruppo Toscano's winning design for the station (one of 96 entries to the competition) sought to capture the essence of the vernacular. The unassuming sobriety of the station built of the local *pietra forte*, its bold geometry, simple surfaces and attention to native materials provided a modernist vernacular-style container for the display of an expanded canon of architecture. Renato Pacini observed in 1936 that the Gruppo Toscano "conceived of the station as a non-monumental, utilitarian structure". This was the very kind of structure Baroni and Berardi had been documenting in the countryside. The building, with its use of iron, reinforced concrete, stone, structural glass, and *retrocemento*, was a rational structure that constituted the "perfect modern construction"<sup>5</sup>.

Critics like Pacini borrowed heavily from Alberto Sartoris' influential 1935 text *Gli Ele-*

<sup>3</sup> For a succinct summary of the different architectural philosophies and principal players see Ghirardo, "Italian Architects and Fascist Politics", as well as Nicoloso, *Gli architetti di Mussolini*. Nicoloso provides a particularly thorough assessment of the role of different universities in the training of architects.

<sup>4</sup> On Piacentini's pivotal role in architecture culture see Terry Kirk, "Marcello Piacentini, the Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista, and the University of Rome", in *The Architecture of Modern Italy. Volume II: Visions of Utopia, 1900-Present*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), pp. 84-94. The journal *Architettura e Arte Decorativa* founded by Roberto Papini, Gustavo Giovannoni and Marcello Piacentini ran from 1921-1931 at which point it was renamed *Architettura rivista del Sindacato Nazionale Fascista Architetti*. This ran from 1932-44.

<sup>5</sup> Renato Pacini, "La Stazione di Firenze Santa Maria Novella", *Architettura*, April 1936, pp. 145-162, p. 162.





*menti dell'Architettura Funzionale* that identified Rationalism with a sense of democratization of materials, the standardization of building elements, and the simplification of building plans. But more importantly, the station synthesized the teaching of the Florence Architecture School where there was an emphasis on simplicity or *struturalità* (as Raffaello Brizzi, a teacher of the members of the Gruppo Toscano termed it), materials, and an interest in celebrating the roots of Tuscan architecture. The Gruppo Toscano localized Le Corbusier's modernist concept of identifying and abstracting the geometric purity of ancient Roman architecture by successfully applying the strategy to Tuscan architecture. As Nino Pollaci observed in 1933, the station provided an example of how "modern Italian architecture might be created through abstracting the principal features of the massing of historical forms"<sup>6</sup>.

In the design of the station the Gruppo Toscano presented an architectural response to the *Strapaese* movement. The *Strapaese* philosophy, which had been made manifest in painting and writing, was now evidenced in built form through the creation of an unpretentious building that sought to put forth an image of simplicity through its simple lines, spaces, and forms, as well as through its utilization of everyday materials in a straightforward fashion. The building celebrated local culture not only through the use of specific building materials but also in how it related to the highly charged historical environment of late medieval and Renaissance Florence.

<sup>6</sup> Nino Pollaci, *Architettura standard e architettura italiana*, (Palermo: Officine Grafiche 1933) as quoted in Richard Etlin, *Modernism in Italian Architecture, 1890-194*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), p. 312.



## What was Fascist Allegiance?

During the 1930s it was in an architect's best interest to toe the party line. The central government established architectural schools, underwrote the publication of journals such as *Architettura*, *Casabella*, and *Domus*, and sponsored professional design competitions. Although buildings had been designed and built for centuries, architecture was a relatively young discipline. The profession was first recognized with the establishment of a professional union in 1923. The first school was set up in Rome in 1919 with Venice following in 1926, Turin in 1929, Naples in 1930, Florence in 1931, and Milan in 1933. In many ways it was a discipline that came of age during the regime. Furthermore the PNF was the biggest patron and advocate of architecture during the period. As a result, architects learned to become adept at finessing their interests in terms of the party agenda so as to gain support for their projects.

To what extent the 'Tuscan Rationalists' interest in promoting a native Italic style was complicit in the government's increasingly racist agenda remains unclear. Certainly someone like Pagano, a good friend of Giuseppe Bottai (the PNF minister and one-time Governor of Rome), would have been aware that the regime was investing in rural Italy. Regardless of whether or not individuals like Pagano acted at the behest of the Ministries in Rome, their celebration of a native architectural form and the desire to ground modern architecture in anonymous traditions helped to legitimize the national campaign of promoting rural culture.

There was no single Fascist aesthetic in Italy and no designated government architect, as was the case in Germany. Instead, Fascist era architecture in Italy consisted of a range of styles and practices — everything from the streamlined neo-Classicism of Giuseppe Terragni evident in new construction, to the heavy-handed restorations of medieval and Renaissance buildings undertaken by Giuseppe Castellucci and others in towns like Arezzo, San Gimignano, and Figline Valdarno. There was no sense of a sovereign modernity. Bottai asserted, "it is the unlimited vastness of content and the plurality of forms which give the Italian artistic tradition a universal value and an influence a thousand times larger than its national territory".

There was a more subtle and perhaps subversive way of involving young architects in projects that were sympathetic to party goals: by supporting exhibitions such as the 1936 Triennale and publications such as *Architettura ed arti decorative* (renamed *Architettura* in 1932), *Casabella* and *Domus* (both founded in 1928), in which they could write about architecture or feature their own projects, or both. The PNF controlled and mediated ar-

opposite  
Spectators during  
Hitler's visit to  
Florence in 1938  
(Photo: Life  
Magazine)



chitecture through the venues of exhibition, photography, film, ephemera, architectural criticism, public debate and the experience of architecture through tourism initiatives. More than any stylistic distinction, it was the process of architectural representation and mediation that characterized Fascist architecture.

Although members of the Gruppo Toscano were not “official” government architects in the way Albert Speer was in Germany, there is no doubt that their work was officially sanctioned. Mussolini invited them to his offices at the Palazzo Venezia in Rome in June 1934 and proclaimed that their design for the new train station in Florence was beautiful, would be liked by the Italian people, and would inspire young architects to be courageous.

While it is uncertain if members of the Gruppo Toscano were Fascist practitioners (members such as Berardi adamantly denied membership in the PNF), it is clear that their work, including the railway station of Santa Maria Novella, was held in great esteem by the government and should be contextualized within the cultural milieu of the 1930s. The native character, while in keeping with modernist rhetoric, was also endorsed by contemporary political leadership.





## What Modern Architecture did an Architect Emulate?

The preoccupation with native Italic architectural traditions became even more emphatic with the onset of World War II. Admittedly, in the 1920s and early 1930s Italian architects had looked to foreign modernists such as Le Corbusier for inspiration. Le Corbusier was a frequent and respected participant in Italian organized conferences and exhibitions, and his writing was widely read. Carlo Rava, of the Gruppo 7, purchased copies of *Vers Une Architecture* and passed them out to young architects. Piero Bottoni in turn identified Le Corbusier as having propelled the discourse of modern architecture in Italy. However, all of this changed during the heightened state of self-sufficiency in the mid 1930s. This shift is manifest in architectural activities of the period. While Le Corbusier was a frequently featured subject of the journal *Quadrante* when members of the Milanese Gruppo 7 founded it in 1933, he soon ceased to be promoted. The fall of 1936 was one of the last times Le Corbusier was welcomed by the Italian architects — in this case at a conference organized by Piacentini on Architecture and the Figurative Arts at which Brizzi, Giovanni Giovannoni, Giovanni Muzio, Pagano, Paribeni, and Pavolini were all in attendance. By the mid-1930s Le Corbusier was publicly rebuffed, his urban proposals for Rome dismissed, and his attempt to secure the commission to design the plan for the new Pontine town of Pontinia ignored. Mussolini himself purportedly claimed that it was time for Italy to be built by Italians, not foreigners.

By the late 1930s any discussion of the vernacular had become infused with racial and cultural superiority that was familiar to contemporary politics. Several things happened beginning in the mid-1930s that focused the discussion of Italian vernacular architecture in overtly racist terms. The first was the 1935 invasion and subsequent conquest of Ethiopia. This was followed by the introduction of the Race Manifesto in the summer of 1938 and Italy's formal alliance with Germany in 1939.

Within this context native architecture was cited as superior, and architects were encouraged to focus exclusively on Italic (rather than foreign) forms and materials for inspiration. Already in 1932 Michelucci had admonished his readers not to look to modern architecture outside of Italy for inspiration when there was such a strong tradition of "modern" architecture existing in the Tuscan countryside. Roberto Papini made a similar argument in his 1931 convocation address at the Florence architecture school by encouraging students to break with academic tradition in order to study the pure and simple forms of vernacular housing.

In Asmara (capital of Eritrea), the old town was "disencumbered of indigenous buildings". As such, "Italy's budding racism found full expression in the new urban arrange-

opposite  
An  
advertisement  
for Masonite  
published in  
*Casabella*,  
January 1939,  
p. 1



IN COLONIA I MATERIALI DA COSTRUZIONE SUBISCONO LA PROVA DEL FUOCO!  
 UN BUON MATERIALE DEVE INFATTI ESSERE ISOLANTE DAL CALDO E DAL FREDDO, IMPUTRESCIBILE, IMPERMEABILE, RESISTENTE ALLE TERMITI, ADATTO A MOLTEPLICI USI E A MOLTEPLICI APPLICAZIONI.  
 LA MASONITE NEI SUOI DIVERSI TIPI (ISOLANTE, FISSO, PRESSATO E TEMPERATO) È IL MIGLIOR MATERIALE PER COSTRUZIONI ED APPLICAZIONI DESTINATE IN COLONIA.  
 LA MASONITE TEMPERATA, RESISTENTE AGLI AGENTI ATMOSFERICI, È USATA CON ESITO BRILLANTISSIMO PER PARETI ESTERNE E PER TETTI DI CASE COLONIALI.

**masonite**  
 PANNELLI DI LEGNO SCIENTIFICAMENTE RICOSTITUITO

S. A. FELTRINELLI - MASONITE  
 Direzione Amministrativa: Milano  
 via Romagnoli, 3 - Telefono: 82627  
 Stabilimento di produzione: Bolzano  
 Zona Industriale - Telefono R. 13 58

ments for Ethiopia". Native Ethiopians remained ensconced in the northeast quarter of Asmara known as the "indigenous zone" and were legally precluded for reasons of "public order and hygiene" from interacting with Italians. Racial boundaries were maintained in the planning of East African cities. Such apartheid was the norm. Assimilation was never contemplated.

The indigenous neighborhoods of the East African towns were densely populated spaces re-



moved from the new and highly rationalized Italian city and characterized by a haphazard arrangement of huts built of mud, stone, and brick, located on dirt streets, lacking running water and electricity. In maps, the indigenous zone was often devoid of delineated roads, making the distinction from the Italian space extreme. An advertisement for Masonite published in *Casabella* in 1939 draws attention to this visual logic. The rectilinear forms of houses built by the Italian colonizers (using the native material masonite) are contrasted to the “uncivilized” East African huts or “tukul” structures. There was a clear apartheid in Italian Africa — at least on paper if not fully on the ground. Attilio Teruzzi, Vice-Secretary of the Italian colonies, noted: the native did “not have need of a nice, clean, solid and airy house, in a few words, a decent and hygienic house”. In contrast, sanitation was “of utmost importance for guaranteeing security and civility” for the Italians in the colonies.

By locating a distinctive Italic character within the architectural traditions of the Roman past, architectural critics laid the groundwork for interpreting vernacular traditions within the framework of ethnic superiority. The farmhouses studied by Michelucci, Brizzi, and their students in Florence were proof of the continuity of this rational Italic tradition; discussions of the rural soon became overtly infused with racism.

By 1939, when Mussolini’s alliance with Nazi Germany was solidified and France had joined with the Allies, popular rhetoric became explicitly anti-French. This pertained to architecture as well. One critic admonished, there was a need to “find an Italian precedent for the love of geometric forms that were being propagated by the writings of Le Corbusier and European functionalists”. (Le Corbusier, who by this point was practicing in France, had effectively come to be identified as French.) Already in 1934 Tinti dismissed Le Corbusier’s notion of a machine for living, noting that the *casa colonica* was much more complex. He argued that the Italian vernacular tradition embodied the complex interaction of nature, materials, and human needs more successfully than any Le Corbusian project. Corrado Pavolini berated Rationalist architects for not paying enough attention to the local architecture “if only the Rationalists were a little more humble and a little less drawn to the foreign magazines, they would not have to look far for the perfect solution to their theoretical explorations”.

Michelucci sought to have his readers become a little more attentive — and notice that the new forms of architecture also had roots in Italy. The critic Sanminatelli (one of the invited guests to the Hitler-Mussolini dinner held in Florence in 1938) was more explicit, claiming that the vernacular was “faithful to the spiritual character of our race”.

The vernacular entered into Italian architectural discourse in the early 1930s as young



Rationalists “sought intellectual genealogies and justifications for the... international designs they favored”. Similar to the manner in which ancient Roman architecture in Ostia Antica was used to Italianize contemporary architectural discussions of ancient architecture (Ostia Antica provided a streamlined Italic version of Roman architecture that had not been corrupted by the Hellenizing tendencies of non-Italic Ancient Roman traditions), rural architecture provided the means to Italianize the discussion of contemporary architecture. As a result, by the late 1930s a new architectural narrative had been written — one in which Italian modernism was seen as more closely allied to historical native traditions than contemporary foreign ones.

Within this context contemporary writers repeatedly hailed the humble origins of the country house born from the fertile earth rather than the architect’s drafting table. The vernacular was anonymous architecture designed without associated names or stories, and perhaps because of that was more easily adopted into the regime rhetoric of celebrating the native Italic *popolo*. Unencumbered by the intervention of a professional architect, it was suggested that the vernacular was derived directly from the landscape. As such it was the most culturally pure, and unadulterated, architectural precedent available. In other words, modernist architecture had roots in vernacular Italic traditions. There was therefore no need for contemporary architects to look beyond the peninsula for inspiration. By the mid-1930s the Italian public had begun to be receptive to this notion of an inherently racist rhetoric of architecture. It follows that several of the leading architectural practices of the 1930s, including the Gruppo Toscano, Gruppo 7, B.B.P.R., and the Gruppo dei Urbanisti Romani or G.U.R. (also referred to as the Gruppo del Quattro) cultivated a similar sense of anonymity by suppressing the names of the individual architects that comprised the respective practices. The celebration of the vernacular influenced even the branding of young architectural collaboratives.



**Nello Baroni,**  
**view from the**  
**Santa Maria**  
**Novella train**  
**station looking**  
**towards the apse**  
**of the church**  
**of Santa Maria**  
**Novella**  
 (Photo: Baroni  
 Family)



This idea is encapsulated by Nello Baroni in one of his few photographs of the new train station. Rather than a view towards the station, Baroni looked out from the station, from the structure's side porte-cochere in a manner that frames the apse of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century church of Santa Maria Novella. While the church represents the ecclesiastic and gothic tradition of Florence, distinct from the rural vernacular traditions documented by the young architects, both traditions are local and Tuscan. As such, the modern station embraced historic Tuscan architecture by carefully staging it. The image raises interesting questions regarding what aspects of the building Baroni found to be of particular interest. Given that the station was the building through which people passed upon arrival to Florence, its role in framing visitors' first views of the historic city was of importance. The station provided an opportunity to embrace the site-specific relationship between past and present. This was so much the case that young architects flocked to Florence to study the new building.

Critic Alberto Luchini noted in 1933 that the design of the station sustained the "cubic,



rectilinear and virile character of the great Italian tradition”<sup>7</sup>. A few years later in 1936, at the time of the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, Pacini was more precise in his commentary, claiming that the front of the building was not only proof of the existence of the “spirit of the Tuscan race”, but provided concrete evidence that such design had mastered the field of architecture [emphasis mine]<sup>8</sup>.

Professionals praised the station. Yet it was highly controversial in the popular press. There were numerous cartoons that parodied the design. In one, the idea for the cascade of glass that unites the roof with the front façade was suggested to be spawned by the dam of the Arno located down river from the Ponte alla Carraia. The implication of such press was that the general public was not yet ready to appreciate the building’s modernist vernacular austerity. Such appreciation would come later, cultivated by an intricate re-patterning of consumption habits.

Architects and critics who wrote about Italic vernacular architecture of the countryside during the 1930s often drew a comparison to contemporary design. When discussing the shared attribute of “functionalism”, some suggested that rural architecture was actually more “modern” than the work of leading modernist designers<sup>9</sup>. The so-called *casa contadina* or *casa colonica* (farmhouse), whether located in a rural hamlet or seen as an isolated farm house, was “an organism that underwent continuous transformation throughout time”, one critic claimed, conditioned by factors such as “climate, economy, and culture”<sup>10</sup>. It was argued that such flexibility in function and design was the very essence of avant-garde design.

In 1934 the Florentine architect Alfredo Lensi made this explicit by renaming the humble country houses “Rationalist” in a provocative article published in *L’Illustrazione Toscana*<sup>11</sup>. For Lensi, rural Tuscan architecture embodied the qualities outlined by Giuseppe Terragni and his colleagues in the *Rationalist Manifesto* of 1926 — it was pure, simple and logical, but above all it was flexible.

Writing in *Civiltà* in 1942, a critic noted, that “the loggia, portico, and cortile of the rural house represented the honest naked communion between man and the countryside”<sup>12</sup>. Its architectural elements were aspects of “true simple beauty”. The critic borrowed heavily from Leonbattista Alberti to argue that the “pure modular forms” of rural housing “constitute an

<sup>7</sup> Alberto Luchini, “Architettura Razionale. Italia Bella, Moderna, Italiana. Perché siamo per il progetto Michelucci”, *L’Universale*, March 10, 1933, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Pacini, “La Stazione”, p. 148.

<sup>9</sup> Bino Sanminiatielli “Case Coloniche in Toscana” *Civiltà*, January 21, 1942.

<sup>10</sup> Antonio La Stella, “Architettura Rurale”, in *Giuseppe Pagano Fotografo*, Cesare de Seta editor, (Milan: Einaudi, 1971), p. 16.

<sup>11</sup> Alfredo Lensi, “Razionalismo nelle vecchie costruzioni”, *L’illustrazione toscana*, January 1934, 26-28.

<sup>12</sup> Sanminiatielli “Case Coloniche”, p. 85.





**Pier Niccolò Berardi, photo of farmhouse, c. 1936**  
(Photo: Archivio Pier Niccolò Berardi)

**opposite Giovanni Michelucci, *Domus*, August 1932, pp. 460-461**

alphabet for architectural language”<sup>13</sup>. He claimed the *casa colonica* “always had a reason for being”<sup>14</sup>. The elementary forms were the most essential features of Italian design. They were functional, geometric and undecorated. And he encouraged young architects to dedicate themselves to their study. And so they did. According to Tinti, the rural house did not simply “provide a model to imitate”, it served as a “point of orientation”<sup>15</sup>.

Bino Sanminatelli’s article, like others of the period, was illustrated with photographs that not only contrasted light and darks, but drew attention to volumes and spatial relationships of rural farm architecture. Through the use of exaggerated camera angles, filters, and dodging, these photos narrated the image of everyday rural architecture. Many of the photographs were taken by the young Florentine architects Berardi and Baroni<sup>16</sup>. Under the guidance of Professors Raffaello Brizzi and Michelucci, the school (founded in 1931) had emerged as a center for the study of rural vernacular architecture. Brizzi

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>15</sup> Mario Tinti *L'architettura delle case coloniche in Toscana con 32 disegni di Ottone Rosai*, (Florence: Rinascimento del Libro, 1934), p. 16.

<sup>16</sup> On the importance of photography at the Florence school of architecture see Gianluca Belli, Giovanni Faneli, Monica Maffioli, and Barbara Mazza. *Architettura e fotografia: La scuola fiorentina*, (Florence: Fratelli Alinari, 2000). Several of the photographs of Berardi and Baroni are reproduced and discussed in this volume.



## FONTI DELLA MODERNA ARCHITETTURA ITALIANA

Poiché vive a sempre fra il pubblico la discussione sui caratteri della nuova Architettura, si può pensare due esempi di esse: coloniche, delle quali è stato rifatto lo schema disegnativo, e dimostrano come a modernità e forme: quelle che il pubblico

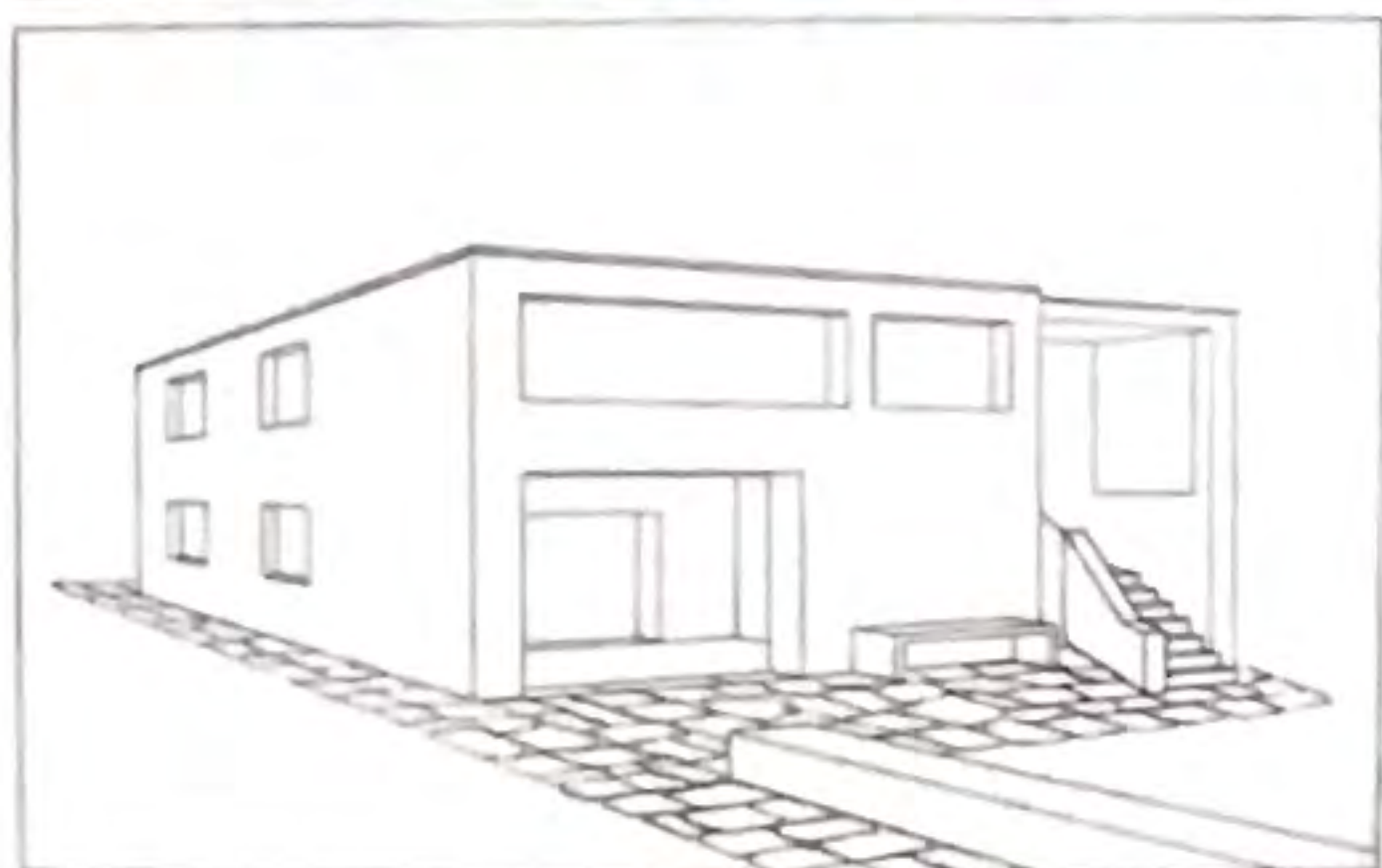
può ancora definire "moderne", per essere più precise "indiosche", hanno pure radici da noi, nella chiara nostra nostra tradizione, e della logica funzionale di questi esempi sono la sviluppo.

Queste fotografie e questi disegni dicono, più di

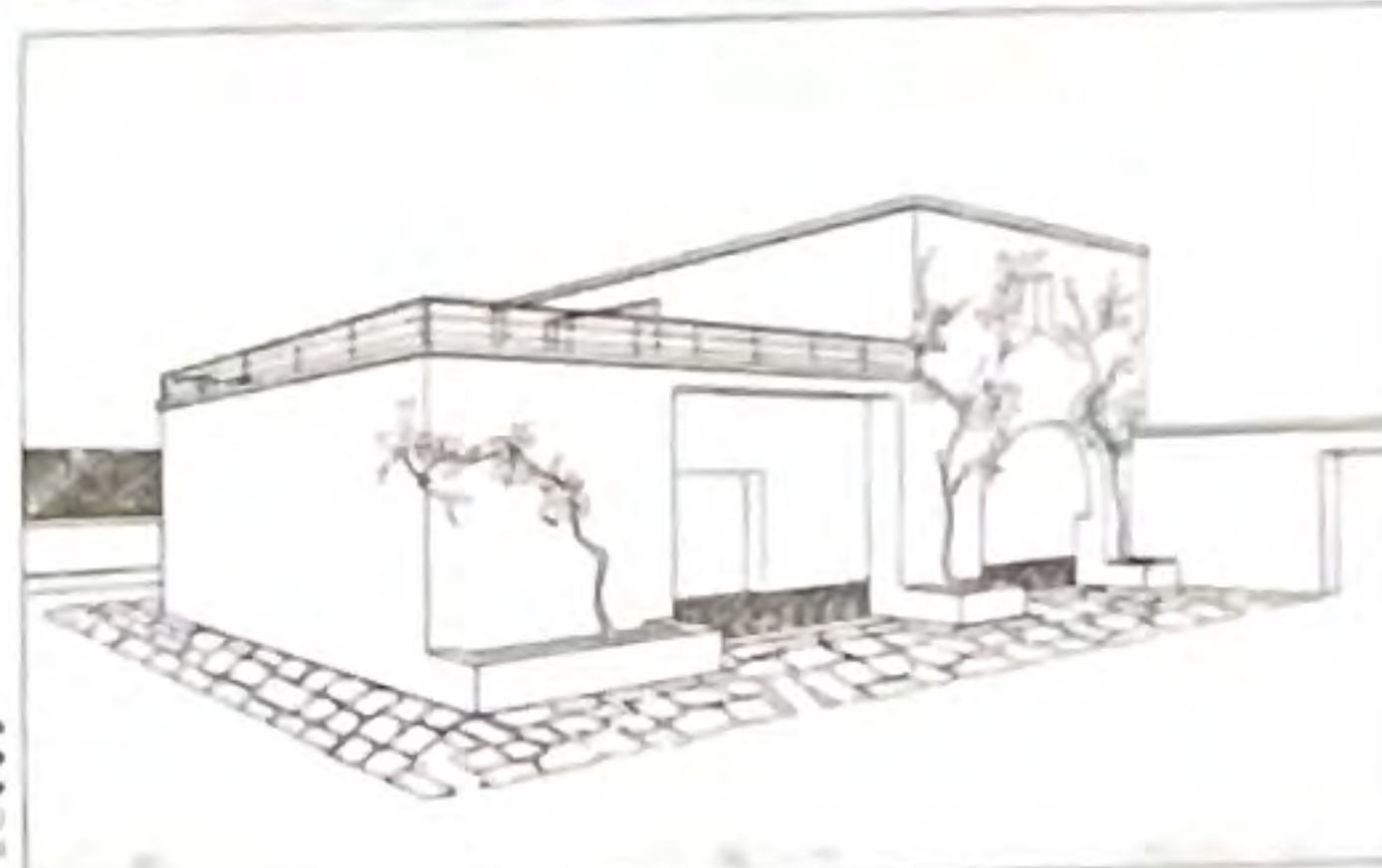
qualsiasi commento, in quale senso si vuole modernizzare, delle costruzioni che differiscono dalle antiche e comunque da quelle generalmente accettate ed accettate soltanto per la sostituzione della terrazza.

elemento antichissimo, elemento mediterraneo, l'uso molti anni più praticato di tutto e per un maggior senso di pulizia che dir si voglia, che tanto affonda gli amatori del vecchio al suo posto.

ANTONIO RIZZI



Casa Poggi  
Casa Poggi  
via Poggi  
via Poggi  
via Poggi



Casa Poggi  
Casa Poggi  
via Poggi  
via Poggi  
via Poggi

(1883-1946) claimed that while architecture should be modern (in the sense that it should respond to the needs and goals of the era), it should exploit what he described as the simple and sincere structure of traditional form<sup>17</sup>. Contemporary architecture should not necessarily be historicist, but instead should draw upon the essential character of Tuscan traditions. The influential art critic Roberto Papini concurred, and during his convocation speech for the 1931-32 academic year encouraged aspiring architects to study rural Tuscan architecture so as to gain an intimate sense of materials, construction techniques, structure, and proportion<sup>18</sup>. In the process they would be able to reconcile the past with the present. Michellucci (1891-1990), a prolific architect, was even more explicit — claiming that the language of modern design could actually be found within local architectural traditions. In a 1932 essay

<sup>17</sup> Ugo Ojetto summarized Brizzi's philosophy in "Per Inaugurare La Scuola Fiorentina di Architettura" in *Annuario della R. Scuola Superiore di Architettura di Firenze, Anni Accademici 1930-31, 1931-32*. (Florence: Tipografia Enrico Aiani, 1933), n. p. Ojetto was a member of the administrative council of the school.

<sup>18</sup> See Roberto Papini, *Architettura e Semplicità. Discorso Pronunciato Inaugurandosi l'anno Accademico 1931-1932 della R. Scuola d'Architettura, Firenze* (Rome: Tip. Terne, 1932). Papini (1883-1957) had been a student of the well known art historian Adolfo Venturi in Rome, was an influential critic on art, architecture and urbanism and wrote frequently for *Rassegna Italiana*, *Dedalo*, *Emporium* and *Corriere della Sera*. He taught art history at the Architecture School in Florence and along with Giovannoni, Piacentini, Cecchelli and Grassi was one of the co-founders of *Architettura e Arti Decorative*. On Papini's writings see Rosario De Simone, ed. *Cronache di architettura 1914-1957: antologia degli scritti di R. Papini*, (Florence: Edifir, 1998).





**Giovanni Michelucci, Palazzo del Governo, Arezzo 1937-9** (Photo: Gianni Porcellini, [www.artefascista.it](http://www.artefascista.it))

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### **Giovanni Michelucci Designs in Arezzo**

Numerous Fascist period structures survive in Arezzo: apartment buildings, the train station, the main tourist office, the post office, and several government buildings. One of the most imposing structures is the 300-room, four story, curving Palazzo del Governo designed by Giovanni Michelucci in 1937-39. Today this brick and travertine complex is home to the Prefecture and Questura (police headquarters). Built within the city walls, in the southwesternmost part of the city, the Palazzo was designed to be seen from the train. At the time of its completion the building was understood as an important stage in the evolution of Italian architecture by Marcello Piacentini.





**Pier Niccolò Berardi, photos of farmhouses, c. 1936** (Photos: Archivio Pier Niccolò Berardi)

published in *Domus*, Michelucci paired photographs of a farmhouse with drawings that abstracted the design principles in modernist terms. He sought to show how the modern forms had roots in Italian vernacular architecture.

The work produced at the school during the 1930s, including Cesare Augusto Poggi's 5<sup>th</sup>-year design studio project for a rural village, and Baroni's senior thesis — a design for an airport — reflects the philosophy of a vernacular modernism<sup>19</sup>. More precisely, for those studying architecture in Florence during this period, rural vernacular architecture was used as a frame for contemporary practice and debate. As Brizzi noted in a lecture to the students, "we can finally abandon the prejudiced view that only buildings that are monumental in character are worthy of architectural competitions". "Even the smallest farm, the most simple, the most utilitarian, constituted an important inspiration for modern architectural design"<sup>20</sup>. So inspired, he and others led the school's periodic *gita d'istruzione*, or instructional excursions that traversed the Tuscan countryside<sup>21</sup>.

During this period of heightened interest in the rural vernacular the architecture students Berardi and Baroni enthusiastically canvassed the Tuscan countryside photographing farmhouses from Florence to the Amiata region in southern Tuscany. Their photographs emphasized geometric rhythms of the simple forms and bold shapes. Haystacks paired with houses became studies in parallel forms. In one photograph a farm complex is framed by the buildings of another farm. In numerous images, the inclusion of farmers and farm equipment drew

<sup>19</sup> On the work of the students at the school see, Giuseppe Pagano-Pogatschnig, "L'Architettura Moderna nella Scuola superiore di Architettura di Firenze", *Casabella*, n. 44, August 1931, pp. 46-50.

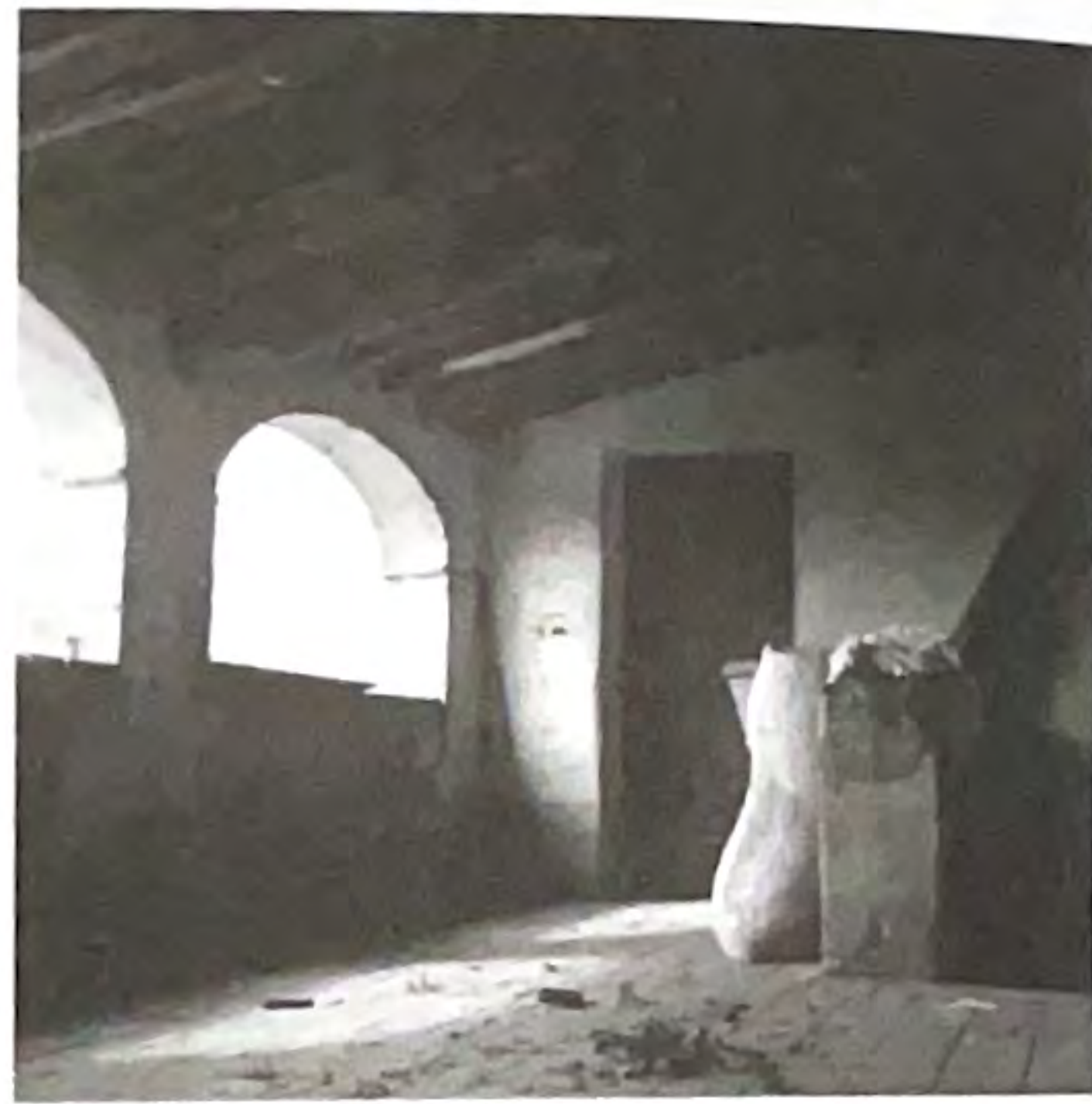
<sup>20</sup> *Annuario della R. Scuola Superiore di Architettura di Firenze, Anni Accademici 1930-31, 1931-32*, (Florence: Tipografia Enrico Aiani, 1933), n.p.

<sup>21</sup> For example on May 5 1935 they went to Siena, San Galgano, and San Gimignano where they saw the house towers and Collegiata paintings and Benozzo Gozzoli paintings. See *Annuario della R. Scuola Superiore di Architettura di Firenze, Anni Accademici 1934-1935*, p. 153.



Pier Niccolò  
Berardi,  
farmhouse,  
c. 1936

(Photos: Archivio  
Pier Niccolò  
Berardi)



Nello Baroni,  
photo of farm  
complex, Amiata  
c. 1936  
(Photo: Baroni  
family)

Pier Niccolò  
Berardi, photo  
of Tuscan  
farmhouse,  
c. 1936  
(Photo: Archivio  
Pier Niccolò  
Berardi)



attention to the underlying functional character of the spaces, ordered for productivity. Some photos underscored functional clarity; others emphasized the physical essence of structures: the play of light and shadow highlighted the qualities of tufa block, wood, stucco, and terra cotta — drawing attention to the way in which native materials were deployed. Tinti noted in his 1934 study that rural architecture boasted a flexibility of both form and material, ingeniously maximizing what was locally available so as to provide the most rational solution to the design issue at hand and constitute a kind of *avant le letter* Rationalism<sup>22</sup>. Corrado Pavolini argued that there was an honesty or integrity to their composition — both in terms of form and location — that drew inspiration from the land. The house was born directly from the dirt, drawing “vital nourishment” from the

<sup>22</sup> Tinti, “Architettura delle Case”, p. 12.



surrounding landscape. Whether constructed of brick or stone, the house was not something merely “deposited in its surroundings, but rather was the flower or fruit of its surroundings”<sup>23</sup>. Pavolini went so far as to poetically claim that the blood of the *campo* ran in the *intonaco*. The house was simultaneously rational, functional, and beautiful<sup>24</sup>. As such, there was tremendous regional variety.

Tinti observed that the rational character of the Tuscan house is intuitive — dependent upon a spiritual and concrete relationship between people and their surroundings<sup>25</sup>. Its form “corresponds to practical needs and conditions” such as the orientation to the sun and wind or the kind of cultivation<sup>26</sup>. As such it was organic in principle — the essence of what the rationalist architects sought to theorize and abstract<sup>27</sup>.

The photographs taken by the Florentine students were published in contemporary articles and books. But their principal debut was the new Santa Maria Novella train station. It was there that the photographs along with others were displayed banding the first class waiting room, restaurant and platform area<sup>28</sup>.

Presumably the young architects/photographers selected the photographs and decided where in the station to place them. In the main platform area there were 56 stock images from the Fratelli Alinari photo studio (restored in 1990 and again in 2015) including Pompeii, the Roman forum, Monreale, Pisa’s Leaning Tower, Milan’s cathedral, Venice’s Ca d’Oro, and Siena’s campo. The photos were printed on paper, in black and white, measuring 2 by 1.5 meters and glued to a wooden and canvas frame. The original 1930s images were covered with a new set of photographs from the 1950s — views of popular touristic sites such as Viarregio, Rimini, Portofino.

Photographs taken by Baroni and Berardi appeared elsewhere in the station — and have since been removed. That said, no other station used photographs in a similar manner. Baroni and Berardi’s photos of rural architecture was exhibited alongside some of Italy’s best known monuments. So, for those arriving at the Florence station, the panoramic frieze of Italian architectural monuments would have contained rural sites. While the pairing of rural architecture with Italy’s canonical monuments created a sense of equivalency between genres that was indebted to Rationalist doctrine, it also allowed architecture of the countryside to be positioned within architectural history. The democratization of the canon, both in

<sup>23</sup> Pavolini, “Case Toscane”, p. 21.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>25</sup> Tinti, “Architettura delle Case”, p. 13.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>28</sup> For contemporary illustrated essays showing the use of photographs in the new station see Agnoldomenico Pica, “La Nuova Stazione di Firenze — S. Maria Novella”, *Rassegna di Architettura*, May 1936, pp. 133-140 and Pacini, “La Stazione”.





Photographic campaign, 19<sup>th</sup> century, including Fratelli Alinari founders Leopoldo and Guseppe Alinari, reproduced from Elvira Puerto, *Fotografia fra Arte e Storia. Il 'Bulletino della Societa Fotografica Italiana' (1889-1914)*, Naples: Alfredo Guida Editore, 1996, p. 65

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### Photographing Primitive Italy

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century photography was the rage throughout Europe, and Florence was the capital of the medium in Italy.

Leopoldo Alinari and his competitor Brogi established professional studios and shops in the 1850s. Alinari established his first photo lab in 1852. He was joined by his brothers Giuseppe and Romualdo in 1854 to create the oldest photographic firm in the world. By 1863 the base of Alinari operations was on the via Nazionale. Soon after, the brothers had a shop in the Palazzo Spini Feroni on the via Tornabuoni. And by the turn of the century they had stores in Rome, Venice, Naples, Paris, Brussels, Dresden and Marseille. They were one of the greatest photographic firms in Europe-famous for their reproductions of art as well as landscape scenes and portraits. Giacomo Brogi and his son were in turn in business by 1856, opening a studio in 1864 and a second base of operations in Naples in 1871. Paganori, Metzger and Alvino had smaller operations in Florence. All contributed to the sense that Florence was a major photography center. And according to the Alinari catalogues of the 1870s, two thirds of the photographs were taken in Tuscany.

opposite  
Back of  
photograph No.  
104770 notes  
"With Botticelli"  
in Bernard  
Berenson's  
handwriting  
(Photo: Villa I  
Tatti, Harvard  
University  
Center for Italian  
Renaissance  
Studies)



Photographing rural Tuscany was a part of a larger late 19<sup>th</sup>-century project of documenting people and places. The countryside with its houses and resident peasants presented a seemingly simple way of life. Exhibited and published, photography ensured that the countryside became shared culture.

While reformers such as Alessandro Marcucci, Giovanni Cena and Duilio Cambellotti used photographs of squalid country living to promote improvements in education, others used the same photos to decry modernity's destruction of Italy's native culture in a romantically charged fashion that laid the groundwork for agri-tourism and slow food. In 1887 the first Esposizione Nazionale di Fotografia was held in Florence followed by the founding of the Società Fotografica Italiana. Vittorio Alinari and Alfredo and Carlo Brogi were heavily involved — participating in organized excursions into the Tuscan countryside to take photographs (accompanied by ladders so they could achieve the perfect view), and serving as officers of the organization and on photography juries.

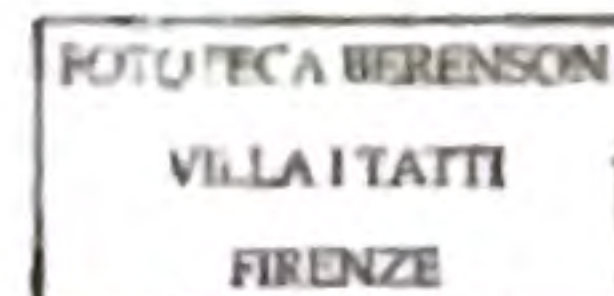
The Society maintained a monthly journal that proved to be an important periodical within Italy and abroad — running until 1914. The journal provided a biography of a nation eager to cultivate a shared understanding of a pre-modern past. As such photography transformed the Italian countryside into a colonial outpost with photos of the countryside presented as uncivilized. At the same time the Society and journal were active abroad — in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. The journal provided an important link to foreign photography journals based in London, Paris, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Geneva, Vienna, Berlin, Chicago, Boston and New York. They shared technical information. This meant that the Florentine photographers were in touch with the likes of Eadweard Muybridge.

Coeval with the rise of photography was the rise of anthropology — a discipline with strong roots in Florence under the auspices of the University where Italy's first Museum of Anthropology was set up in 1869 to display material objects, weapons, clothing and tools from missions to Asia, Africa and South America. Anthropology was adept at using photography to document indigenous peoples and places outside of Italy (demonstrated by the Museum's large photographic archive). Now photography was being used within the country as well. It is clear that the black and white or sepia images seemed to allow the factual documentation of populations — including those in rural Tuscany.

Sandby Photo  
July 23, 23  
who wrote "è mado"  
Bohucio Filippini?

47 X 32

M. B. B. B.



104 770





**Santa Maria Novella train station, Florence, c. 1938. The photographs of Italian sites can be seen on the back wall.** (Photo: Alinari ACA-F-044318-0000)

**Santa Maria Novella train station, Florence, waiting room. Photographs of Italian sites can be seen on the side walls, from *Architettura*, April 1936, p. 156**

**opposite  
Installation  
of the Sixth  
Triennale  
Exhibition,  
Milan 1936**  
(Photo: Pagano  
and Daniel,  
*Architettura  
Rurale Italiana*,  
1936, collection  
of David Rifkind)



terms of what was included and who had access to it within the confines of the train station, is notable. Whether the Gruppo Toscano cared what the public thought upon seeing the photographs is not known. What matters is that the photographs of rural architecture were there — within a neo-vernacular container.

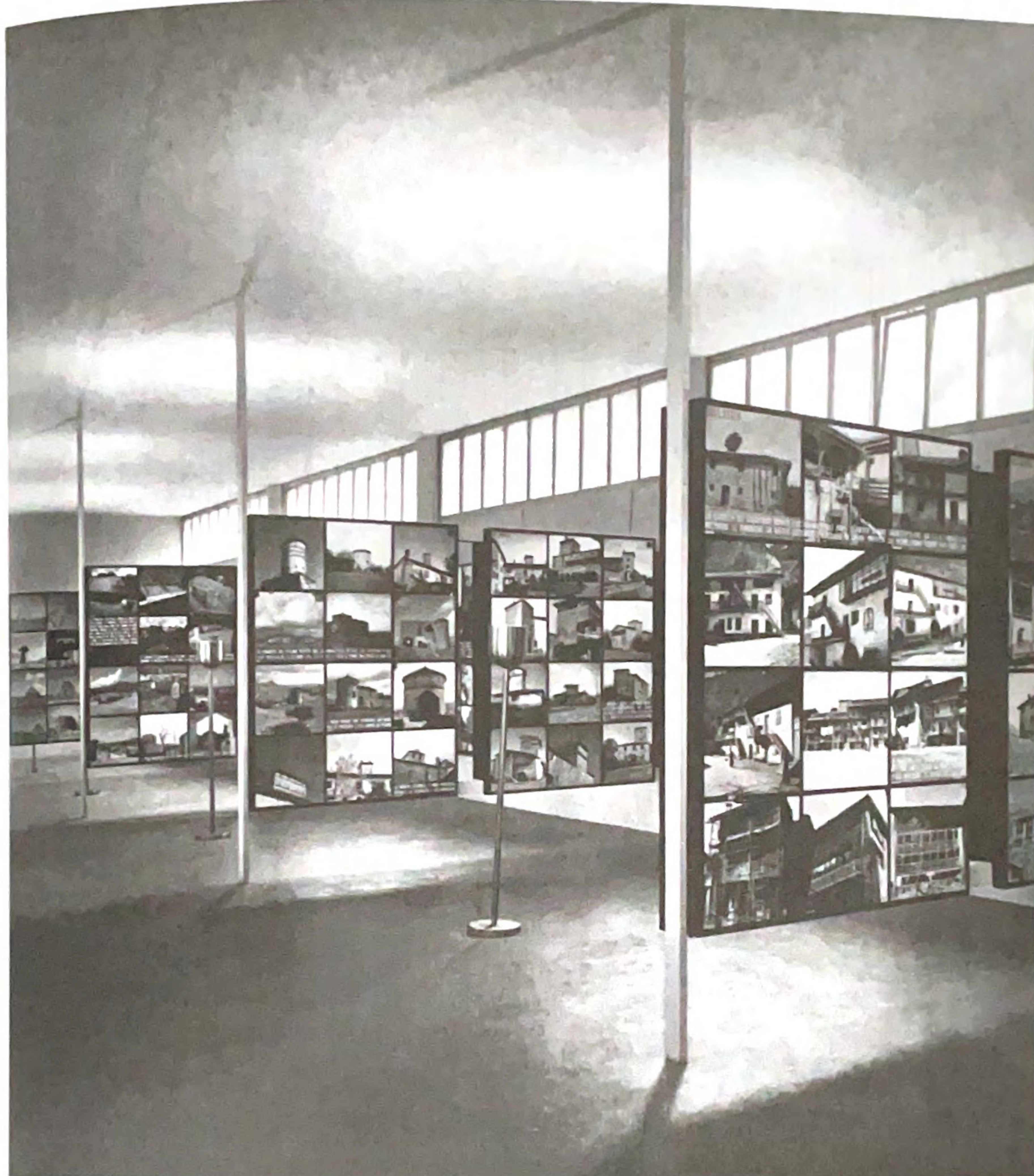
The Gruppo Toscano chose to image an abstracted and perfected rural architecture. The *case popolari* are de-peopled. There is no sense of economic hardship or architectural dereliction. In the end the rural architecture on display in the SMN train station is similar to the way in which Michellucci abstracted the rural farm house for *Domus* — it is entirely formal.

Members of the influential but short-lived Gruppo 7 (Luigi Figini, Guido Frette, Sebastiano Larco, Adalberto Libera, Gino Pollini, Carlo Enrico Rava and Giuseppe Terragni), who signed the *Rationalist Manifesto* in 1926 criticized enshrining history within a few monuments. In contradistinction they promoted expanding the architectural canon. The photographs in the train station did just this. The photographic frieze that wrapped its way around the train station waiting room provided an alternative architectural history. Its inclusive form embodied a new attitude towards Italy's architectural patrimony, one that was indebted to a way of looking as defined by Rationalist thought.

The photography of rural farm structures gained further recognition in 1936 when it was featured in an exhibition of rural Italian architecture, organized by Giuseppe Pagano and Guarniero Daniel for the PNF-sponsored Sixth Triennale of Architecture in Milan — one of the most industrialized and progressive regions of Italy<sup>29</sup>. The exhibition, officially titled the *Funzionalità della Casa Rurale*, or Functionality of the Rural House, exhibited farm architecture (houses and various outbuildings) from the Italian peninsula as

<sup>29</sup> Giuseppe Pagano and Guarniero Daniel, *Architettura Rurale Italiana. Quaderni Della Triennale*. (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1936). See also the discussion of Giorgio Ciucci, *Gli Architetti e il Fascismo. Architettura e città 1922-1944*. (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 1989). Daniel was born in Berlin in 1898 and trained at the Politecnico of Berlin and subsequently at the Politecnico of Milan.





well as the newly formed Italian East Africa. The goal of the exhibit was to familiarize those who attended the exhibit with what the show's organizers called "the true autochthonous tradition of Italian architecture"<sup>30</sup>.

Another goal of the exhibit was to propel a Rationalist architecture, which would be more closely tied to local, native traditions<sup>31</sup>. In so doing a new genealogy for modern architecture was established — one that had roots in Italian (not French) soil. This was at a time when foreign connections to modernism were being re-scripted — in literature, film, and art<sup>32</sup>. Of

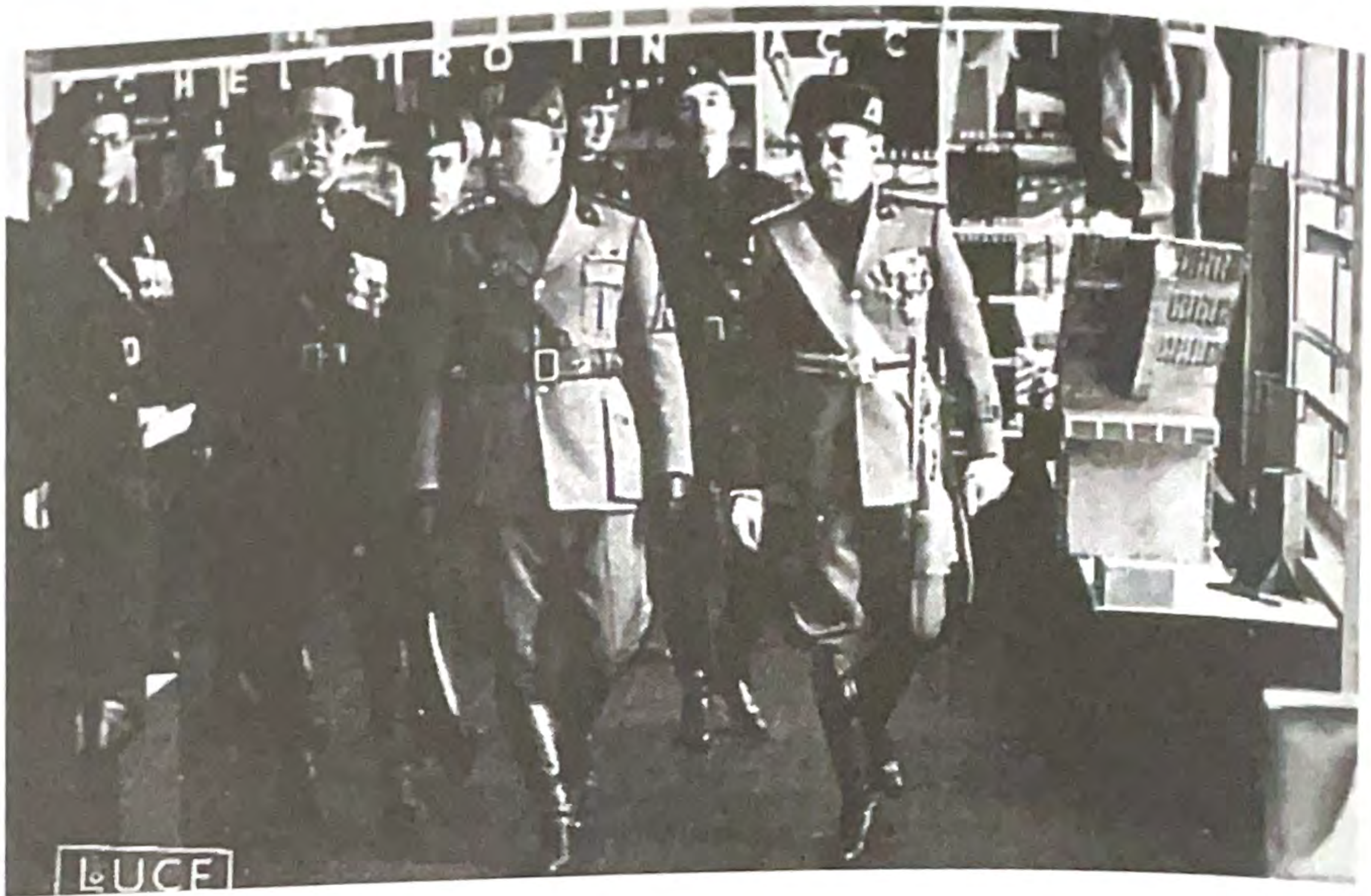
<sup>30</sup> Pagano and Daniel, *Architettura Rurale*, p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> This was noted by Giovanni Fanelli and Barbara Mazza, *La Casa Colonica in Toscana. Le fotografie di Pier Niccolo Berardi alla Triennale del 1936*, (Florence: Octavo, 1999).

<sup>32</sup> On the minimizing of foreign genealogies see Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities*, 136.



Pagano, second from left, leading Mussolini through the Triennale exhibition  
(Photo: Alinari/Istituto Luce)



course, the exhibition presented an abstracted and perfected view of the rural — one in which the hard realities of farm life were suppressed. Although the organizers might not have wanted to admit it, the exhibition perpetuated an idealized view of the rural.

As Pagano and Daniel noted, such native architecture was similar to contemporary design in “moral” as well as “formal” terms as evidenced by its “clarity and logic”<sup>33</sup>. Perhaps equally important was the notion that the study of rural architecture made explicit the relationship between form and function — which a study of architecture on stylistic terms had, according to the exhibition organizers, succeeded in making obtuse<sup>34</sup>. For Pagano and Daniel, vernacular architecture was utilitarian architecture — structural, economical, functional<sup>35</sup>. While such a rural modernism had already taken root in places like the United States, the recognition of the value of such architecture gave Michellucci and Brizzi’s plea an Italian stage.

Pagano (1896-1945) came to this project as a practiced designer well versed in a variety of media. He was a part of a heady cultural scene first in Turin and then in Milan, where he collaborated with designers, literary figures, scientists and industrialists<sup>36</sup>. As an architect he had an active career designing stores, offices, private houses, and institution-

<sup>33</sup> Pagano and Daniel, *Architettura Rurale*, fronticepiece. This was also noted by Fanelli and Mazza, *La Casa Colonica in Toscana*, p. 12.

<sup>34</sup> Pagano and Daniel, *Architettura Rurale*, p. 12.

<sup>35</sup> Pagano and Daniel, *Architettura Rurale*, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> Such as Arturo Martini, Persico, Sartoris, Mario Labò, Ettore Sottsass, Giulio Carlo Argan, Giovanni Agnelli, and Gino Olivetti.

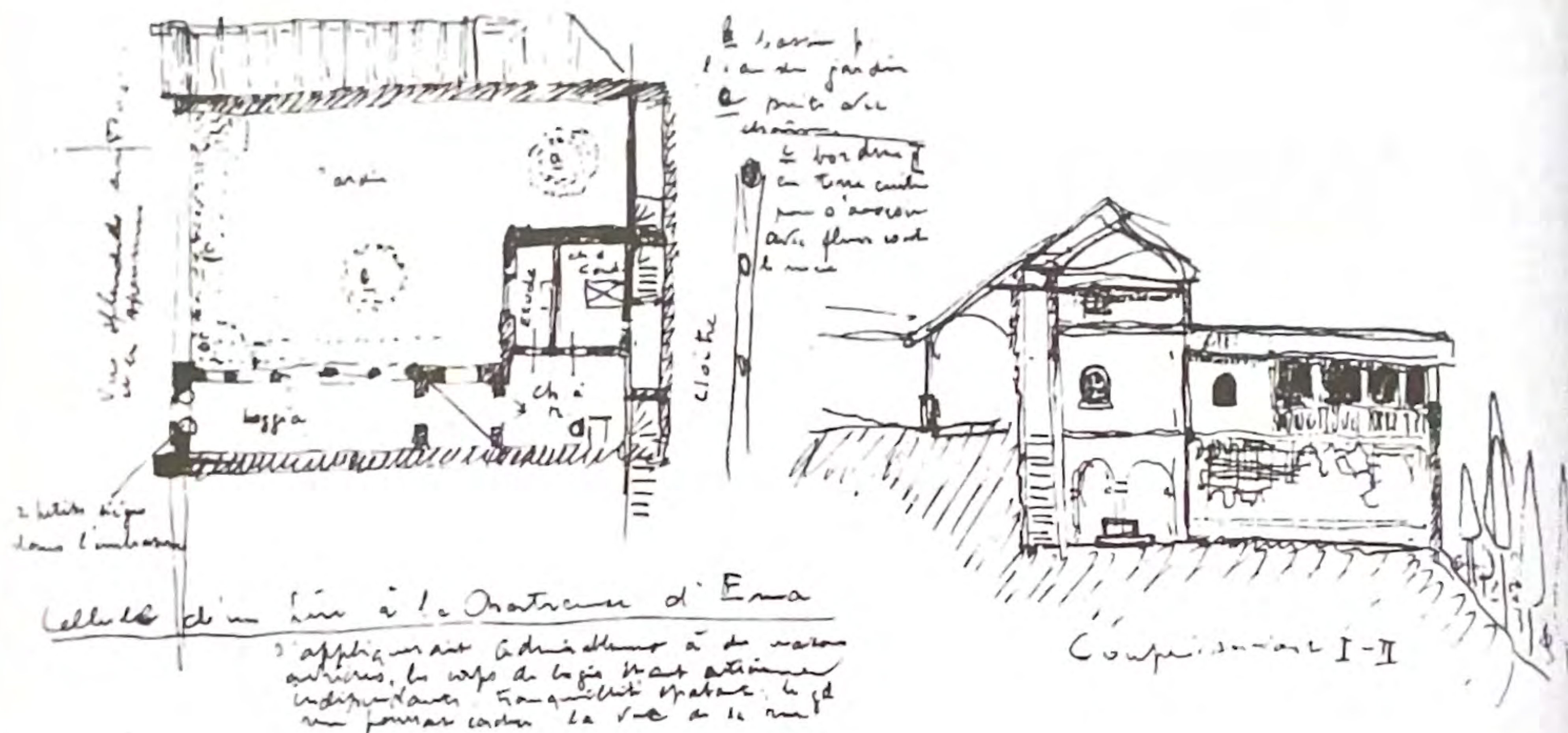


al structures such as his well-known Physics building for the University of Rome in 1934. Pagano was one of the first architects involved in the design of trains, including the interior of the Breda ETR200 in 1936. His design of furniture was prolific. Pagano was also heavily involved in designing exhibitions. He organized the contents of the Esposizione Internazionale di Torino held in 1928, conceived the displays for the 1934 Mostra dell'Aeronautica in Milan, designed the Italian pavilion at the 1937 Paris Expo, as well as pavilions for the 1932, 1933, and 1938 Fiera Internazionale di Milano. In addition he served as director of the period's most important architectural journals: *Casabella* beginning in 1933 and *Domus* in 1941. With the exception of his work in Rome, most of Pagano's projects were based in the north — which underscores his particular fascination with the vernacular architecture of rural Italy. It was “other” to the industrial north — and as such a part of Pagano's own kind of colonialist project. For Pagano, rural architecture was modern, it was also so different it had to be documented.

Pagano was an accomplished photographer and his interest in the countryside was an important aspect of his overall photographic activity. Historians Cesare de Seta and Giorgio Ciucci have pointed out that Pagano was a populist, documenting a wide range of vernacular culture from festivals to craftsmen to traditional building materials such as bricks. It is of no surprise that he was drawn to rural architecture. He shot dozens of images for the Triennale exhibition and as a compendium of 61 photos in the second half of the exhibit catalogue. The photographs for the 1936 Triennale were exhibited anonymously as if to emphasize their vernacular quality — despite the fact that they were taken by identified architects such as Berardi (in the case of the Tuscan farmhouses), Gino Chierici (in the case of the Puglian *trulli*), Pagano, and Daniel. The images were mounted in large display panels that mimicked the graphic layout of *Casabella* (bands of images within black frames). For the most part the photographs were arranged thematically according to architectural components (loggias, balconies, staircases, windows, terraces), building materials, and construction techniques. In this format, the emphasis was placed upon repetitive taxonomies or the standardization of architectural components. The buildings became the ultimate machines for living in a Le Corbusien sense.

The contents of the exhibition were published in a heavily illustrated catalogue edited by Pagano and Daniel. While we don't know who read the catalogue, or how many copies of the book were printed, we do know it was inexpensive — costing only 20 lire and printed on cheap paper. The text emphasized that the study of the *casa rurale* was valuable not only for the extent to which it could contribute to the study of functionality but for the extent to which it explained practical problems of new rural building construction by the PNF throughout It-





**Le Corbusier, plan and section of the Certosa, Galluzzo, drawn September 1907,** (lost original is reproduced in H. Allen Brooks, *Le Corbusier's Formative Years*. Charles-Edouard Jeanneret at La Chaux-de-Fonds, p. 107)

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## Learning from John Ruskin

As John Ruskin's writings were translated into French, German, Spanish, and Italian during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century his influence became more widespread. A generation of young Modernists such as Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius gained an appreciation for medieval Italian architecture by reading Ruskin and following his itineraries. Le Corbusier traveled through Italy in the fall of 1907 with a newly printed French edition of Ruskin's *Mornings in Florence*, compiling notebooks filled with drawings of the architectural details discussed by Ruskin. His canon of Italian sites was grounded in Ruskin's writing.

During his three-week trip to Tuscany, the 20-year old Jeanneret visited sites celebrated by Ruskin in Pisa, Lucca, Pistoia, Prato, Fiesole, Siena, and Florence. He made little attempt to embrace sites that lay outside of Ruskin's purview. Tellingly, it was only on his last day in Florence that he visited Brunelleschi's dome of the Florence cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, which Ruskin had dismissed as having thrown away "every common advantage".

Le Corbusier spent a day at the 14<sup>th</sup>-century Cistercian monastery perched above the Ema stream at Galluzzo, a town just south of Florence and praised by Ruskin in the "First Morning", which he notes will prepare the viewer better "for to-morrow morning's walk". The monastic complex contains 18 individual two-storied living quarters (complete with ambulatories overlooking small private gardens) situated along three sides of the *Chios-tro Grande*, a series of chapels, communal refectories, and other spaces.



Le Corbusier termed the arrangement at the Certosa "a modern city" and "the solution of the working house community". The monastery became a model for Le Corbusier's idea of the architectural promenade, as well as the generative concept for many of his later housing projects including the Immeuble Villas of 1922, the design for a University Quarter of 1923 and the various Unités d'Habitation of the 1950s and 1960s in which an individual and the collective could coexist.

Twentieth-century historians such as Reyner Banham, Nikolaus Pevsner and Bruno Zevi have confined Ruskin's influence to the theory of restoration and discussions of 19<sup>th</sup>-century historicism. His role in constructing modernist discourse is not fully appreciated. For the Anglo-American audience familiar with the work of Ruskin decades before those who read it in translation, Ruskin was largely imbedded within discussions of neo-Medieval architecture. But for young European modernists like Le Corbusier, Ruskin's ideas were read in a different way. Ruskin's celebration of humble structures that maintained a sense of "dignity" and "harmonize(d) beautifully with the nobility of the neighboring edifices, or the glory of the surrounding scenery" struck a chord with a generation of architects seeking to find inspiration from simple vernacular structures. Pagano and Daniel criticized Ruskin's comments for verging on a "romantic adoration of the picturesque", nonetheless they acknowledged that his apt assessment of the structures' "dignified simplicity" (made in *The Poetry of Architecture*) had not been properly noted.

Ruskin's influence on architects, historians, and critics who came of age during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is clear. Individuals like the Florentine practitioners Michellucci, Brizzi, Berardi, and Baroni who were busily photographing the Tuscan landscape took Ruskin's admonition to draw attention to the rural to heart. Even those like Pagano who were critical of Ruskin's nostalgic rhetoric still found reason to reiterate his ideas.

Ruskin claimed that his writings were intended to provide an aesthetic education rather than to serve as a guidebook. And so they did. In the case of Piacentini who co-founded the journal *Architettura ed arte decorative* in 1921, Ruskin validated an interest in culture which encompassed decorative art, anonymous vernacular traditions, and medieval architecture. Piacentini's journal quotes heavily from Ruskin reinforcing the notion that Ruskin's texts taught young architects not only what sites to see, but more importantly, how to look. It was Ruskin's promotion of the "Italian cottage" and various taxonomies that held immediate appeal for the Rationalists.

Ruskin's thoughts held currency amongst young architects in part because translations of his writings were for the first time readily available, in part because his writings were sympathetic to the goals of the Rationalists, and perhaps most importantly, because his philosophies reso-



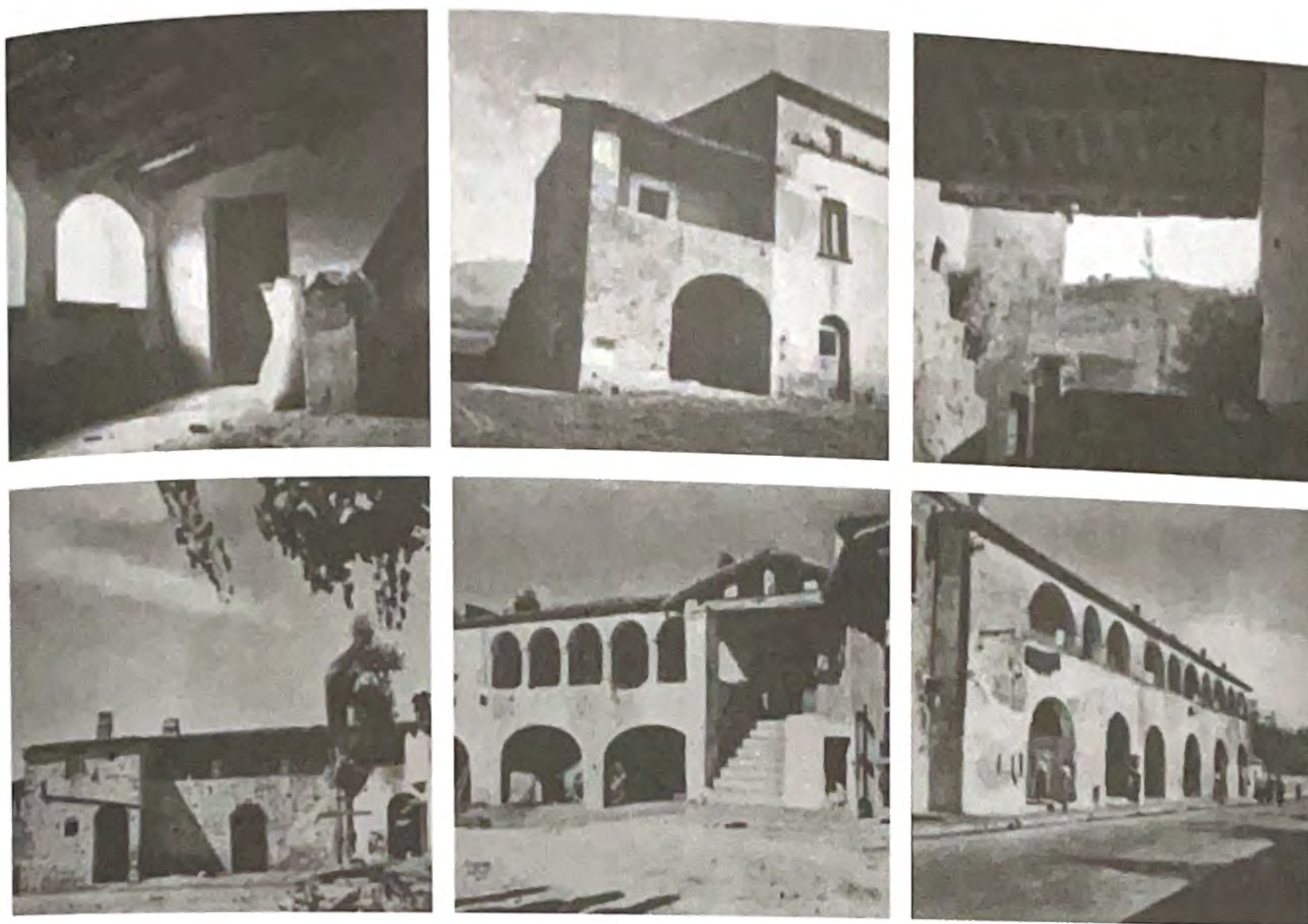
nated with the government's agenda to cultivate a sense of national identity that was rooted in native culture. After all, Ruskin saw the art of Tuscany or what he referred to as "Italy proper" as a source of "social and moral teaching".

The terminology used to describe the vernacular during the 1930s — descriptive phrases like "rude simplicity", "pure beauty", "native spirit", and "modesty", recall Ruskin's writings. Lidia Morelli noted in her 1931 domestic handbook that Ruskin famously said that there is "no greater architecture than that which is simple".

The rhetoric of simplicity and interest in the *medioevo*, shared between Ruskin and the rationalists, is no coincidence. Ruskin's influential texts including *Mornings in Florence, Being Simple Studies of Christian Art for English Travelers* (1837), *Modern Painters* (1843), *The Poetry of Architecture* (1838), *Stones of Venice* (1851-1853), and *Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1857) celebrated the honesty and simplicity of medieval architecture and pre-industrial artisan culture.

Ruskin's modern preference for the simplicity of the medieval as rooted in the rural goes back to Giotto — an artist whom he claimed should be admired above others. As Ruskin describes in his book *Giotto and his works in Padua* (1854) the painter, as Vasari had first observed, was discovered tending sheep in Tuscany — in a landscape where the "scattered houses of a farm [were] grouped gracefully upon the hill-sides".





**Pier Niccolò Berardi's photographs of farmhouses** (Photos: Archivio Pier Niccolo Berardi)

aly. The rural house was seen as an example for new housing being built as a part of reclamation projects. As the authors noted, the study of rural architecture demonstrates that there is an “absolute aesthetic dependence on functional logic” which is in turn site specific<sup>37</sup>. Such functionalism was “not contaminated by falsehoods of mediocre bourgeoisie architecture”, and as such should “catch the eye of the modern architect”<sup>38</sup>. Repeatedly, Pagano and Daniel emphasized the modesty, honesty, and integrity of rural architecture. The spontaneous practical solutions evidenced in rural forms were “free of any rhetorical or academic implication”<sup>39</sup>. As such they constituted an “autochthonous language”<sup>40</sup> — a “manner of expression that is close, both morally and formally, to the beliefs of the contemporary architect”<sup>41</sup>. Not only could the study of rural architecture help reorient contemporary architectural discourse towards issues of “structure, economics, and function”, Pagano and Daniel noted, but it was by 1936 a moral imperative<sup>42</sup>. Rural architecture was inexpensive, small in size, and depen-

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

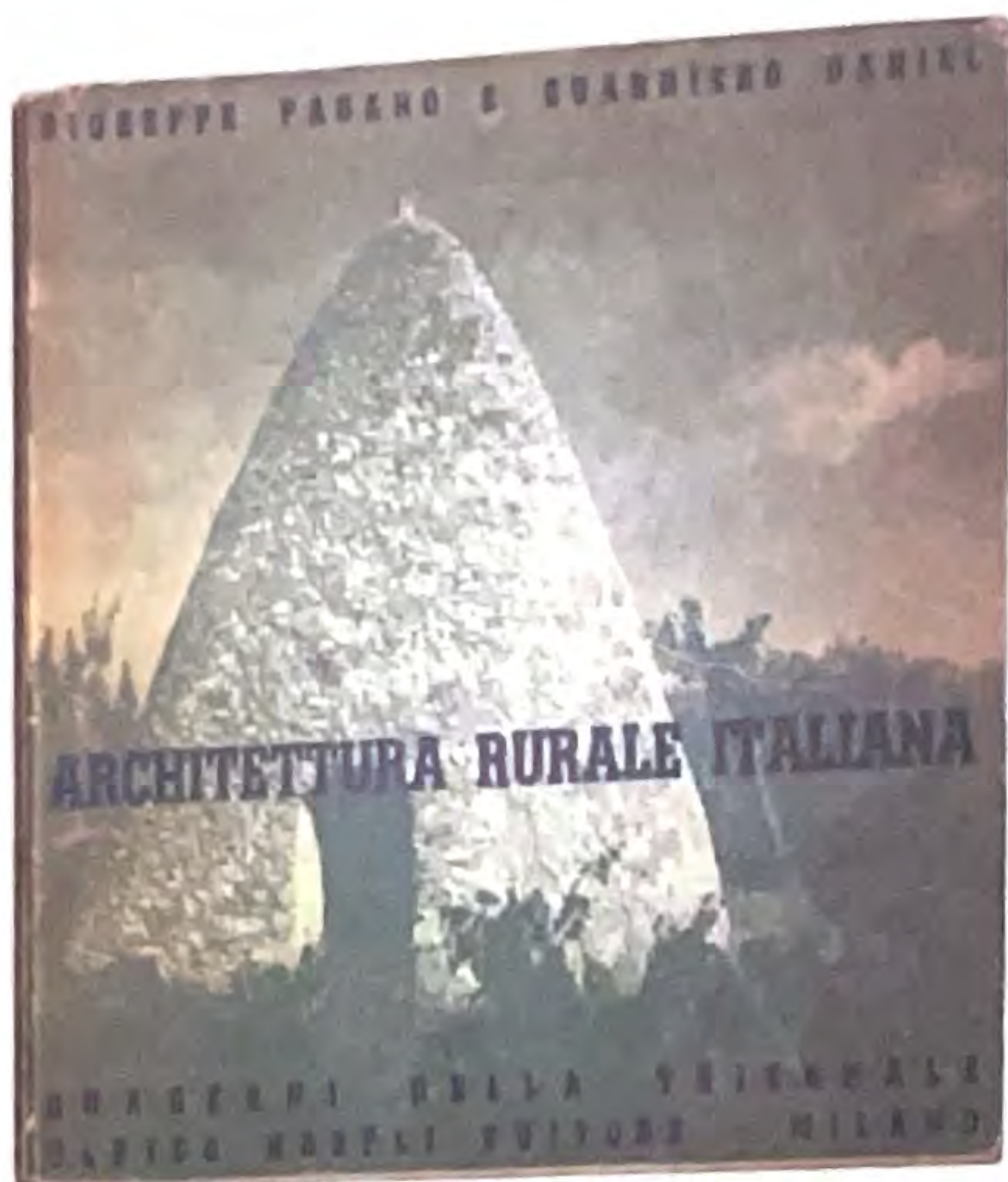
<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.





Pagano  
and Daniel,  
*Architettura  
Rurale Italiana*,  
cover

opposite  
Tuscan  
farmhouses  
with central  
belvederes,  
(Photo: Pagano  
and Daniel,  
*Architettura  
Rurale Italiana*,  
p. 55)

dent upon local materials. Not surprisingly the exhibition was reviewed positively in the contemporary architectural press<sup>43</sup>. Enzo Carli wrote in *Casabella* that the proliferation of publications on rural architecture was indebted to the rhetoric of modern architecture<sup>44</sup>. Contemporary architects were receptive to the discussion of rural architecture in no small part due to the fact that the language of the discourse was remarkably familiar to the modernist debate.

Some of the buildings that were photographed, included in the Triennale catalogue and defined as rural, were in actuality not anonymous vernacular struc-

tures. Many were so-called *case da padrone*, or villas of land-owners who managed vast acreage and many farms under the central Italian system of share cropping<sup>45</sup>. Some were actually designed by known architects. Art historian Claudia Lazzaro has argued that the origins of the hipped-roof house type with its central belvedere (frequently featured in the images of Baroni and Berardi) dating from the 1560s through the 1700s and pervasive throughout Tuscany, was actually the invention of Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola (1507-1573). She notes, it is not “possible to distinguish a tradition of farmhouse architecture that is purely vernacular”<sup>46</sup>.

It is clear that the narrative presenting the *casa rurale* as a non-pedigreed tradition conveniently overlooks certain historical realities. We now know that it was the 16<sup>th</sup>-century land reclamation projects of the Grand Duke Ferdinand I that facilitated the construction of rural buildings in Tuscany — many of which were subsequently celebrated by Fascist period critics and designers as vernacular<sup>47</sup>. The *casa colonica* is itself a term applied *post facto* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to construct an artificial polarity between the tradition of the Renaissance villa and that of the rural farmhouse<sup>48</sup>. Indeed, the terminology used in the 1427 *Catasto Fiorentino* to describe rural architecture does not include *casa colon-*

<sup>43</sup> See for example “La Mostra dell’Architettura Rurale”, *Rassegna di Architettura* (August/September) 1936, pp. 261-270 and Enzo Carli, “Il ‘Genere’ Architettura Rurale e il Funzionalismo”, *Casabella* (November 1936), anno IX, No. 107, pp. 6-7.

<sup>44</sup> Enzo Carli, “Il ‘Genere’”, p. 6.

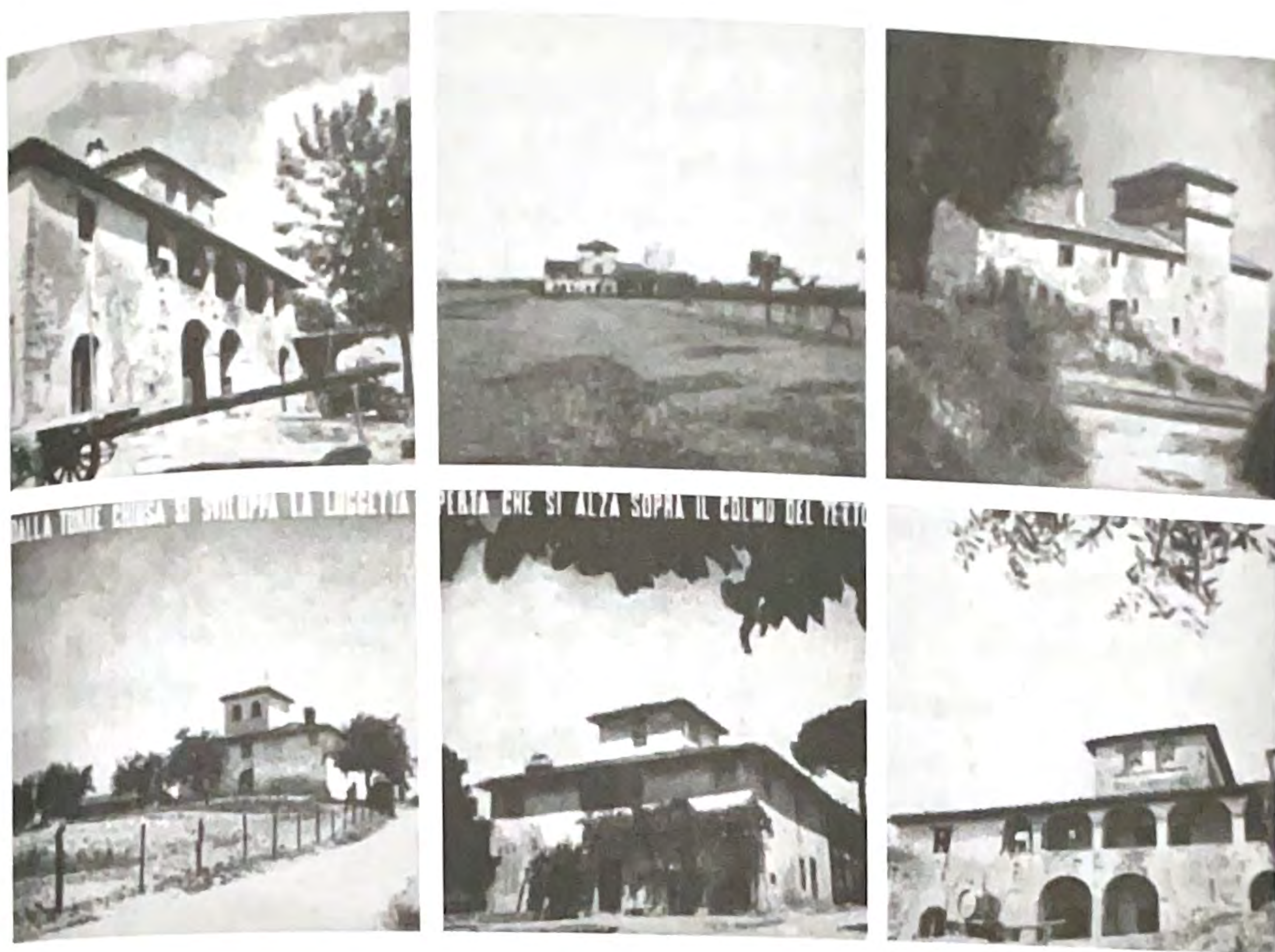
<sup>45</sup> On these houses see Renato Stopani, “Case da Padrone”. *L’edilizia signorile nella campagna Toscana ai primordi della mezzadria*, (Poggibonsi: Editoriale gli Arcipressi, 2001).

<sup>46</sup> Claudia Lazzaro, “Rustic Country House to Refined Farmhouse: The Evolution and Migration of an Architectural Form”, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, XLIV, December 1985, pp. 347-367, p. 347.

<sup>47</sup> Lazzaro, “Rustic Country House”, p. 361.

<sup>48</sup> Lazzaro, “Rustic Country House”, p. 347-348.





ica. Instead the *casa da lavoratore*, (worker's house), *casa*, *casetta*, *casolare*, and *casa da padrone* are mentioned<sup>49</sup>. As such 15<sup>th</sup>-century terminology suggests, there existed a wide range of rural building types — houses in which owners and workers lived together, farm compounds, small settlements with clusters of houses, rural villages, and seigniorial houses. In truth, it was extremely rare to find a single isolated rural house — the kind that is so prominently featured in Pagano and Daniel's catalogue.

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular housing had emerged as a well-defined area of study closely related to the emerging disciplines of Italian ethnography and folklore centered in Florence<sup>50</sup>. Studies such as Giulio Ferrari's compendium of rustic architecture (what he referred to as modest and poor) across time and regions provided an important 20<sup>th</sup>-century contribution to the discourse<sup>51</sup>. By the 1930s the interest in rural architecture received collateral sup-

<sup>49</sup> See Renato Stopani, *Medievali 'Case da Lavoratore' nella Campagna Fiorentina* (Florence: Salimbeni, 1978) for an analysis of the Catasto.

<sup>50</sup> For a history of the folklore and ethnography movement in Italy and the role of figures like Giuseppe Pitre and Luigi Pigorini see Massimo Tozzi Fontana, *I Musei della Cultura Materiale* (Rome: La Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1984). See also Stefano Cavazza, "La folkloristica italiana e il fascismo: Il Comitato Nazionale per le Arti Popolari". *Ricerca folkloristica* 15 (1987): 109-22.

<sup>51</sup> Ferrari notes in his preface that his study of rustic architecture encompasses modest and poor construction. See Giulio Ferrari, *L'Architettura Rusticana nell'arte Italiana dalle Capanne alla casa medievale. Duecentocinquanta tavole con illustrazioni, rilievi, disegni e pitture raccolte e ordinate con testo esplicativo da Giulio Ferrari*, (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1925), p. 11.



port from the burgeoning movement in folklore studies. The First National Congress of Popular Traditions held in Florence in 1929 provided an opportunity to survey the field of folklore studies in Italy. Over the next decade three more congresses were held with the intellectual support of pre-eminent scholars such as Paolo Emilio Pavolini (father of Minister Alessandro and architectural commentator Corrado)<sup>52</sup>.

The government supported the study of Italian traditions in various ways. The Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro, or O.N.D., founded in 1925 to provide after work leisure activities for workers, sponsored a “return to tradition” in which the celebration of regional customs became an important part of the organization’s education program. Under the direction of Enrico Beretta, the celebration of traditions allowed the huge numbers of people to demonstrate “their pride in the Italian race”<sup>53</sup>. The Comitato Nazionale Italiano per le Tradizione Popolare, or CNITP, was founded in Florence in 1930 as a government entity to promote folklore studies in a series of regional centers. New university programs, such as that led by Giuseppe Cocchiara in Palermo, helped train a new generation of folklorists. Between 1936 and 1938 a number of ethnographic exhibitions were held throughout Italy, which were received favorably within a triumphant climate of Ethiopian colonization<sup>54</sup>. Journals such as *Lares*, founded in Florence in 1930 by folklorists Paolo Toschi and the elder Pavolini, provided important venues for disseminating information about popular traditions — ranging from ephemeral to architectural. Even the populist journal *Le Vie d'Italia* (with a circulation by the 1930s of as many as 180,000, one of the largest in the country) contributed to the discourse by sponsoring its *Concorso Folcloristico*, enticing readers to send in photographs of folkloristic scenes. These various projects helped provide an idea of a hard-working Italian populace with deep-rooted traditions that would help sustain them during the period of self sufficiency. And they were pervasive. *Le Vie d'Italia* for example was sent to all TCI or *Touring Club Italiano* members until it ceased publication in 1968. With only a brief hiatus during the war (1943-46), the journal helped guide the popular perception of place for decades.

The revived interest in the rural landscape in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was also propelled by a newfound interest in the literary tradition that narrated the agricultural — the interest in Virgil’s poem the *Georgics* (c. 39-29 B.C.). Six new Italian translations of the poem were published during regime rule. Several editions were printed as small and inexpensive paperbacks (costing as little as one lira)<sup>55</sup>. The populist *L'Illustrazione Ital-*

<sup>52</sup> Others involved with the conferences were Raffaello Corso, Paolo Toschi, Raffele Ciampini, and Giuseppe Cocchiara.

<sup>53</sup> Massimo Tozzi Fontana, *I Musei*, p. 30.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>55</sup> The edition Virgil, *Il Lavoro dei Campi. Libro Primo delle Georgiche*, translated by Gerolamo Bottoni, (Milan:



iana published a volume on Virgil in 1930. School textbooks were filled with essays on Virgil including one by Giuseppe Bottai, the Minister of Education, who promoted the Virgilian idea of rural life and hard work<sup>56</sup>. Another essay, by the then deceased Nobel Prize-winning poet Giosuè Carducci, celebrated Virgil's rural roots<sup>57</sup>. Even the self-described dilettante farmer Antonio Origo noted that his mission was to create a piece "of classic Virgilian beauty" at a remove from the "artificiality of city life"<sup>58</sup>. Virgil's narration of agricultural life became familiar to an Italian audience that would not necessarily have known how to read Latin. If there was any question as to the public reception of Virgil, the writer's accomplishments were further reinforced through the bi-millennial celebrations of his birth in 1930 (which purportedly exceeded the Dante celebrations of 1921) as well as a series of commemorative stamps representing Virgilian episodes<sup>59</sup>. The latter were intended in the minds of the Fascist government to curb emigration through a re-avowal of prosperous life in rural Italy. Both Virgil and Mussolini acknowledged the importance of those who lived and worked in the countryside, and promoted the virtues of agricultural life. PNF propaganda for schoolchildren claimed that through their works, whether the *Georgics*, or Mussolini's *Bonifica* projects, one could see the "health, wealth, and strength", that the countryside brought to the nation<sup>60</sup>. It was suggested by G.B. Grassi-Privitera and others that the *Georgics* fostered a renewed sense of importance for rural life. Gerolamo Bottoni noted in a 1935 edition of the poem, "the earth and man are like brothers"<sup>61</sup>.

Pagano and Daniel emphasized that their goal went beyond the ethnographic — so as to claim a place for such architecture within mainstream architectural writing. By rescuing what was until then a little-known architecture, they hoped to counter the "chorus of pessi-

Carlo Signorelli, 1935) cost one lire and was a part of the series Biblioteca di Letteratura. A more expensive illustrated version Virgil, *Le Georgiche di Virgilio nella traduzione di Bernardo Trento* (Milan: Antonio Vallardi Editore, 1930) was available for five lire. There was also the small paperback edition Virgil, *Bucoliche e Georgiche, versione di Giuseppe Lipparini* (Milan: Istituto Editoriale Italiano la Santa, 1927) which was a part of a series called the *Romanorum Scriptorum Corpus Italicum* which was edited by Ettore Romagnoli and sought to publish all the Latin writers. The book's frontispiece included an image of the Fascist fasces and imperial eagle. There was also Virgil, *Le Georgiche*. Translated by Giuseppe Albini, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1930), *Le Georgiche Di Virgilio*, trans. Bernardo Trento, edited by Antonio Marenduzzo, (Milan: A. Vallardi, 1930), and *Le Georgiche*, translated by Francesco Della Corte (Florence: Sansoni, 1942).

<sup>56</sup> Giuseppe Bottai, "La Cisione del Lavoro di Virgilio", in Franco Galdenzi, *Nella Luce di Roma. Letture di Storia e di Politica di letteratura e d'Arte*, (Naples: Editrice Rispoli Anonima, 1940), pp. 73-74. I thank Silvia Hagopian for bringing this text to my attention.

<sup>57</sup> Giosuè Carducci, "Virgilio", in Franco Galdenzi, *Nella Luce di Roma. Letture di Storia e di Politica di letteratura e d'Arte*, (Naples: Editrice Rispoli Anonima, 1940), pp. 70-72.

<sup>58</sup> Origo, "Verso la bonifica integrale di un'azienda nella Val d'Orcia", in *Atti della R. Accademia dei Georgofili*, 1937, pp. 18-30, p. 18.

<sup>59</sup> Theodore Ziolkowski, *Virgil and the Moderns*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 19. The stamps are reproduced in the *Enciclopedia Virgiliana* 2, pp. 496-497. I thank Sylvia Hakopian for bringing the stamps to my attention.

<sup>60</sup> From a speech dated October 1930, published in G. B. Grassi-Privitera, *Virgilio e le Georgiche Parole ai Propri Allievi* (Palermo: Scuola Top. 'Boccone del Pvero', 1931), p. 13.

<sup>61</sup> Virgil, *Il Lavoro dei Campi*, p. 21.



mists, that saw Italy only through the charts of the various *Soprintendenze* or Alinari negatives”<sup>62</sup>. They, like Michellucci and Brizzi, wished to expand the canon of architectural history beyond great monuments, either by well-known architects, or at well-known sites. For the general public, as well as many professionals within the field, the vernacular was unfamiliar territory. Indeed, while gathering material for the exhibition, Pagano wrote to the various regional Superintendents of Fine Arts, requesting that they photograph rural architecture in their respective regions. Ironically, the Superintendent of Tuscany – the provincial office responsible for managing and maintaining cultural patrimony – responded by saying, “there was nothing of interest to photograph”<sup>63</sup>. This comment shows the extent to which attitudes towards vernacular culture had yet to be positively shaped. The Fascist-era presentation of an anonymous, a-temporal, simple and unchanging rural architecture was a cultural construction. This narrative provided a means of remapping the Italian landscape as the progenitor of native design. It was a narrative shared with *Strapaese* rhetoric and in keeping with the discourse of self-sufficiency, but not necessarily historically accurate.

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<sup>62</sup> Fanelli and Mazza, *La Casa Colonica in Toscana*, p. 12.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*



Seek to live in healthy houses with a lot of light and ventilation  
(Pellegrino Artusi, *La scienza in cucina e l'arte di mangiar bene*, 1891)

PS

PE

A number of ills were blamed for low population growth levels in cities during Fascist rule. In 1933, the physician Cesare Coruzzi concluded that the poor hygiene of city housing contributed to reduced reproductive potential. He claimed that the lack of sunlight in crowded working-class housing caused anemia. In addition, it was widely believed that working women were more likely to suffer from lower body weight and poor resistance to so-called “urban” diseases such as tuberculosis, syphilis, and malnutrition<sup>1</sup>. Pellegrino Artusi argued that women (not men), living in dark, unventilated spaces would be prone to hysteria and neurotic behavior<sup>2</sup>. In addition urban residents were more likely to postpone marriage and children. Much of the blame for infertility was placed on women. “In both medical and social scientific discourse, the city was seen to denaturalize and de-feminize women”, and, of course, adversely affect fertility<sup>3</sup>. The legacy of the *Strapaese* movement would have served to heighten anxiety about the city. In contrast to the sterile city, the countryside was presented as a fertile landscape. The Italian government, like many Western governments at the time, made a conscientious effort to improve urban living conditions while simultaneously seeking to curtail migration from the country to the city. The PNF wanted to improve housing in cities — without the added complication of having it taken over by people from the countryside. These initiatives, some more successful than others, included increasing transportation networks between urban hubs and surrounding communities in an attempt to preclude the desire for permanent migration. It was felt that if the city was easily accessible from the country, people would visit but be less likely to feel the need to permanently move. Train routes were particularly important in this regard.

<sup>1</sup> As noted by Elizabeth Dixon Whitaker, *Measuring Mamma's Milk: Fascism and the Medicalization of Maternity in Italy*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000), p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Pellegrino Artusi, *La scienza in cucina e l'arte di mangiar bene*, (Florence: R. Bemporad, 1935), pp. 17-18.

<sup>3</sup> David G. Horn, *Social bodies: science, reproduction, and Italian modernity*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994) p. 98.



*Igiene: difesa e salute della razza*, 1939, Novara, Istituto Geografico di Agostini Gianrui Petragani, p. 61, collection of the Biblioteca Cremona

*Igiene: difesa e salute della razza*, 1939, Novara, Istituto Geografico di Agostini Gianni Petragani, p. 33, collection of the Biblioteca Cremona



There was a series of urban design strategies intended to improve the quality of life in high-density areas. *Risanamento*, or urban renewal projects, were undertaken throughout Italy: Milan, Rome and Siena. Grand new avenues were cut through existing neighborhoods bringing increased visibility, air circulation, and sunlight. Invariably, such new construction displaced large communities of the working classes to new communities located in the city outskirts. For those who remained, modern apartment buildings were built. These new enclaves contributed to the PNF's self declared *Bonifica Umana*, or human reclamation project, by facilitating healthier living, which in turn, led to the defense of the race. This improvement of urban living conditions was termed by the urbanist Umberto Piccoli in 1938 as the "ruralization of the house"<sup>4</sup>. As Piccoli noted, the government-sponsored construction of what he termed the "casa eugenica" — with ample light-filled, airy, and sunny spaces — which would constitute a form of what he called *bonifica edilizia* or architectural reclamation.

Urban planning terminology of the 1920s and 30s had overt biological overtones. The parallel between urban renewal and the pseudo-scientific discourse surrounding eugenic architecture and human reclamation is underscored by the role of Nicolà Pende. An endocrinologist, Pende was the director of the Institute of Medical Pathology at the Uni-

<sup>4</sup> Umberto Piccoli, *La bonifica umana e la casa*, (Parma: Officina Grafica Fresching, 1938), p. 120.



versity of Rome and an instrumental figure in the polemical journal *La Difesa della Razza*. He identified the country's "demographic problem" as being a female problem. Not only did Pende see maternity and physical labor as being "biologically incompatible", but he called for legislation which would have prevented "pregnant and breast-feeding women from work outside the home"<sup>5</sup>.

For Pende, like others closely associated with PNF rule, the discourse about protecting and increasing the Italian *stirpe*, or stock, came to be seen as being located within the need for better housing. The decline of marriage and fertility was understood as a specifically urban problem — where poor hygiene, tuberculosis, alcoholism, hysteria and infant mortality could thrive. These conditions were understood to adversely impact procreation and were therefore considered to be a threat to the regime. As such, cities were problematized in biological terms and new, modern architecture was understood as having a positive demographic influence. Umberto Piccoli's insistence on the need for new housing, and particularly one that applied lessons from rural architecture, was based on a comprehensive study of housing conditions he produced for the province of Parma. His report, complete with extensive charts outlining the correlation between the size, orientation, and quality of living quarters and health, underscored the high mortality rate from infectious disease that resulted from dark, humid, and overcrowded housing. As Piccoli noted, it was not unusual to find large families occupying a single bedroom with little air circulation, lack of sunlight, and no access to running water. This was certainly the case in Siena.

Within this framework windows were important — allowing more light, air, and sun to enter into rooms, and potentially providing a view to the countryside. The 1939 book *Igiene: difesa e salute della razza* shows a woman opening a window to reveal the countryside — the locus of good hygiene and the Italian race. Nature, we are told in the book, functions as a kind of filter, purifying the air and ensuring healthy bodies.

In the spring of 1928 Siena's first Fascist podestà, an instrumental local Fascist leader, Fabio Bargagli Petrucci (1926-1936), (who had founded Italy's first university architecture program in Siena in 1909) traveled to Rome to present Mussolini with a plan for the *risanamento* of the historic Salicotto neighborhood. This was an area within the historical fabric of the city contiguous with the eastern flank of the *Palazzo Pubblico* and the site of the former Jewish Ghetto. The need for housing within the confines of the neighborhood meant that houses grew vertically. As a result, streets were narrow and dark. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the neighborhood had become a symbol of decay.

The neighborhood's narrow and twisted streets, overcrowded houses, and antiquated living

<sup>5</sup> Horn, *Social Bodies*, p. 98.





**Map showing the Salicotto neighborhood in Siena**

conditions had been deemed unhealthy<sup>6</sup>. This was confirmed by the neighborhood's frequent outbreaks of tuberculosis and high mortality rate — something that had been known for decades since the first study of tuberculosis was begun in 1898. According to some studies, more than 1,200 people had died in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century alone. The city had long wanted to gut the neighborhood but had been side tracked by creating a city-wide sewer system and public water supply (which reached Siena in 1914) — crucial to combatting 19<sup>th</sup>-century cholera epidemics. But, renovations to the neighborhood were stalled until the Fascist era when fighting tuberculosis, coupled with designing modern housing was a priority.

Bargagli Petrucci commissioned a series of photographs to document the dark and un-

<sup>6</sup> On the Salicotto project see Francesco Fusi and Patrizia Turrini, editors, *Salicotto Com'era. Il Plastico del Quartiere e il risanamento edilizio negli anni '30*, (Monteriggioni: Edizioni il Leccio, 1999).





**Interior of apartments in Salicotto, Photographs commissioned by Fabio Bargagli Petrucci, c. 1929, collection of the Contrada della Torre, Siena**

ventilated apartments. Although the photographer employed artificial light, one could still see that these were dark spaces. Rooms were without windows or electricity. There was no indoor plumbing. A curtain was often all that separated a makeshift toilet (waste bucket) from the rest of the apartment. Kitchens did not have clean work surfaces or running water. There were beds where many people slept. In one case a man slept in the kitchen itself. Walls were filthy and floors were in poor condition. All told, the apartments were small, crowded and squalid. With his sight on *risanamento* Bargagli Petrucci wanted the photographs to serve as documentation of the pre-modern conditions of urban living in the neighborhood and justify urban renewal.

In contrast, period anti-tuberculosis pamphlets show a clean house in which personal hygiene — such as washing hands and brushing teeth — could be maintained and an abundance of healthy food provided — at an idealized table set unlike any sharecropping table would have been with individual drinking glasses and a table cloth — the modern clean house bred healthy families. This is in stark contrast to the dark, seemingly airless and de-peopled photographs of the Salicotto neighborhood.

At that time Bargagli Petrucci's plan included the demolition of the existing buildings and the construction of new structures that incorporated spacious and ventilated streets and small piazzas designed to improve hygiene while enhancing the aesthetic of the area and improving civic life. Individual apartments were to have electricity and running water. Mussolini approved the project and a year later it was presented at the VII Congresso dell'Associazione





Children gathered in front of the Rosa Maltoni Mussolini complex, Calambrone, photo by Nello Baroni, c. 1935  
(Photo: Alinari AVQ-A-001521-0056)

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### Childrens' Health: Seaside Colonies to Fight Tuberculosis

Mussolini's enthusiastic interest in *bambini* of Italian stock is evidenced by his admiring caress of a line of carriages with babies in their swastika-adorned carriages. The regime wanted the public to think that they cared about children. They constructed new schools, sent the children of the working classes to summer camps, and in 1928 re-introduced the Befana at Epiphany to distribute gifts. Adults were continually made aware of the importance of children as the future of Italy. This was what Emanuela Scarpellini might call new spaces of consumption.

This was particularly the case for the children of PTT employees sent to the summer seaside colony of Rosa Maltoni Mussolini which was completed in 1931 according to the designs of Angiolo Mazzoni and located in Calambrone on the coastline between Pisa and Livorno. The camp, like 63 childrens' villages built along the Tuscan and Romag-





Mussolini admires babies of "good stock" during a visit to the Piedmont. One buggy is festooned with a swastika, from *La Difesa della Razza*, May 20 1939, p. 7

Children receiving gifts from La Befana Fascista, 1934 (Photo: Alinari AIL-F-058678-0000)AVQ-A-001521-0056)

na coast, was intended to combat pediatric tuberculosis. The colonies were operated by the regime's divisions that were most interested in the welfare of the children — the ONMI and ONB. Getting children out into the sunshine and fresh air and providing regular meals was seen as a valuable antidote to the conditions in which most children lived during the year and the malnutrition they endured. The camps were a kind of human *risanamento* project. The colony of Rosa Maltoni Mussolini was photographed by Gruppo Toscano member Nello Baroni. Named for Mussolini's mother, who had been a life-long school teacher, the complex served as a seaside summer camp for hundreds of children — providing them with opportunities for physical education, swimming, theater, dance, reading and paramilitary training according to a highly rigorous schedule. LUCE, the regime's film institute filmed a documentary of the children undertaking various activities. The country watched as the children happily frolicked on the beach and in the process, came to equate Tuscany with happy, healthy living.



*Sole, Aria, Acqua, Salute*, 1927, Milano, Edizioni Luigi Alfieri, Guido Mazzoni pamphlet collection, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University



La tubercolosi è una malattia conosciuta dall'umanità fin dai tempi più remoti. Essa è la cagione di gravi danni morali e morali per le famiglie e le Nazioni. Perchè in ogni epoca, scienziati di tutto il mondo e fra questi tanti e tanti gloriosi italiani, hanno studiato con tenace quella insidiosa malattia, per scoprirne le cause, per trovare i mezzi più adatti a combatterla.

Cinquant'anni fa, un grande batteriologo tedesco, Roberto Koch, ha scoperto il bacillo della tubercolosi, che è chiamato appunto "bacillo di Koch". A forma di bastoncino, piccolissimo, invisibile a occhio nudo, questo bacillo è dotato di una straordinaria resistenza, ma è ucciso dalla luce del sole.

Lavarsi spesso le mani.

Mangiare cibi sani ed ora regolare.

Curare la pulizia dei denti e la disinfezione della bocca.

Questi ed altri fattori, che sono spesso alimentati dalla ignoranza, dalla incuria, dalla negligenza, diminuiscono i poteri di resistenza degli individui attaccati dal bacillo di Koch e rendono facile il rapido sviluppo della tubercolosi, che è perciò una delle più temibili "malattie sociali".

Altrettanto facilmente la tubercolosi si trasmette dal malato al sano: essa è, quindi, una "malattia contagiosa" che è possibile evitare soltanto conoscendo e applicando con cura le più elementari norme di vita, dettate dall'igiene.

Sputare nel fazzoletto o nella sputacchiera, mai in terra!

Stare seduti composti, col busto eretto.



opposite  
Vittorio Zani  
and Pedano  
Pedani, model  
of the Salicotto  
neighborhood,  
450 x 130 cm., c.  
1929, collection  
of the Contrada  
della Torre, Siena

Italiana fascista per l'Igiene held in October 1929<sup>7</sup>. At that time a model of the old congested neighborhood was produced and the photos Bargagli Petrucci commissioned, were displayed. By the time the case of Siena was discussed at the conference, work on the *risanamento* efforts were already underway — ceremoniously begun on October 28, 1928, the 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fascist March on Rome. Ceremony was key, as the sanitized Salicotto was cleverly narrated.

<sup>7</sup> See Massimo Bianchi, "Un Esempio di Politica Fascista" in Fusi and Turrini, *Salicotto Com'era*, p. 82.





The Sienese Superintendent of monuments — Peleo Bacci (1924-1941) — who had been the first Superintendent in Pisa, helped redesign the *palio* in 1928 and would go on to supervise the redesign of San Gimignano in the 1930s — oversaw the demolition and reconstruction of the neighborhood. Bacci's involvement is telling as he was skilled at removing centuries of historical detritus to reveal what the past should have looked like. His *sventramienti* — whether evidenced in the redesign of the *palio*, or the loggia in San Gimignano was heavily idealized. The *risanamento* of Salicotto was no different.

Thanks to the financial support of the *Monte dei Paschi*, the Istituto per le Case Popolari, and the city administration, a series of four- and five-story neo-medieval style apartment buildings designed by Egisto Bellini (who was a close collaborator of Bacci), Bruno Bruni, Bettino Marchetti and others were built in the area of the Via di Salicotto. The buildings — built of brick, stone, and concrete were supposed to fit in to Siena's urban fabric. Their massing and





Postcard depicting Mussolini in various poses wearing a dark suit and hat, 1927. From the collection of the Wolfsonian-Florida International University, Miami Beach, Florida, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection (Photo: Silvia Ros, XB 1992 326)

Statue of Francesco Ferruccio, c. 1890 by Pasquale Romanelli, Piazzale degli Uffizi, Florence (Photo: Alinari ACA-F-003145-0000)

RP

### Mussolini's Appearance

opposite  
John Seed,  
Ted Cruz as  
Bronzino's  
"Portrait  
of a Young  
Man" (Photo:  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-seed/what-happens-when-you-mix\\_b\\_9046682.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-seed/what-happens-when-you-mix_b_9046682.html))

In Tuscany Mussolini emerged as a new form of *condottiero*, or knight. As Mussolini became more popular for Italians, so too did Tuscan *condottieri* of historical fame such as Giovanni delle Bande Nere and his acolyte Francesco Ferruccio. Ferruccio was one of the most popular boys names in the region in the 1930s. Alessandro Pavolini named his first-born Ferruccio in 1930 — something he proudly proclaimed in a telegram to Mussolini. Mussolini consciously constructed his appearance and voice. Both were exaggerated, theatrical and designed to appeal to the masses. At some point he began to shave his head so that the public would not be aware he was going bald. Soon after he made sure that he had no facial hair — cultivating an image of modern efficiency and virility. Around this time he also abandoned what historian Victoria de Grazia has dubbed “the cosmopolitan suit of the ‘Americanizer’ in favor of the sober garb of ‘first peasant of Italy’”.



This meant that he no longer wore a suit. Instead he preferred the black fez that had been worn by Italian soldiers in WWI, a gray gabardine military tunic, matching riding pants, a dagger tucked into his belt, knee-high black boots and a khaki shirt. This we know from among other things a suitcase of his clothing that ended up in the hands of an American GI. Far from being what peasants actually wore, it was certainly more restrained than the traditional western suit. And of course it was more militaristic at a time when Italy was beginning to practice imperialism. There was nothing kind, sympathetic or soft about Mussolini's image. And it only became increas-



ingly hard edged over the *ventennio*. Throughout it all he was surrounded by bodyguards. Italo Calvino has noted that Mussolini constructed an image that was easy to swallow. He was energetic, arrogant and bellicose, and maintained the posture of a *condottiero*. Some have even suggested that he patterned himself after Verrocchio's famous equestrian statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni. One could argue that Mussolini even looked a lot like Ferruccio's late 19<sup>th</sup>-century portrait in a niche outside the Uffizi.

In every way he was different than what Italians knew as a statesman. Mussolini's booming voice, distinct pronunciation, and thrust of his jaw made him easily identifiable. He was a perfect parody for children. He exploited new media. Cinema, photography and radio ensured that his image and voice were always present. The Istituto LUCE documented his every move in film. He was continuously seen and heard even if most could not speak to him. Calvino has gone so far as to note that one of Mussolini's most salient features was his pensive pose. His prominent forehead and intense gaze seemed to underline his capacity for thought. Mussolini was well aware of how he looked; he carefully constructed an image that constituted the ultimate *bella figura*. In contrast Hitler adopted his own style and gestures that made the most of his slight physique and nervous agitation. In a way this is similar to John Seed's mash up of a pensive Ted Cruz and Bronzino's Portrait of a Young Man, brows furrowed and book in hand.

Perhaps surprisingly, there is no evidence of Mussolini statuary having been erected in Tuscany. Although there were plenty of lictor rods and Fascist inscriptions there were no public portraits — making the Duce's representation in film and photography even more important.



House in Salicotto, c. 1930, postcard c. 1955, courtesy of Come Era Siena in Cartolina



height was carefully controlled. They had neo-Medieval wrought iron doorbells, torch holders and flag holders. Two different commissions were appointed to ensure that the buildings and their details were stylistically correct. Members included the archaeologist Corrado Ricci (a good friend of Bacci), urban planner Gustavo Giovannoni, and Siennese artist Umberto Giunti — known for his 14<sup>th</sup>-century style forgeries as well as many *palio contrada* costumes.

Rubble from the destroyed buildings was used as infill at the site of the city's new sports stadium, located in the valley of the Rastrello, on which construction began in 1930. Like all Fascist stadia the 20,000 person Siena arena promoted physical exercise and participation in group sports. Thus, the *risanamento* of Salicotto not only helped the city of Siena rid itself of tuberculosis by gutting the Salicotto neighborhood but also helped to create a space that celebrated and trained the active and healthy body.

While work was underway Salicotto residents were relocated to the city's periphery, to 47 new buildings built in the Valli and Ravacciano neighborhoods — south of the city outside the Porta Romana in the case of the former and in the northeastern part of the city in the case of the latter. In total 195 families were moved to 3- and 4-room electrified apartments with running water, bathrooms, and in some cases small gardens. Perhaps surprisingly, most Salicotto residents were unhappy to go — largely because they were forbid-





**House in the Ravacciano neighborhood, Siena** (Photo: Laura Vigni)

den to bring any furniture to the new housing blocks in the hopes of preventing the spread of tuberculosis. In the end only 10 families returned to Salicotto after several years.

Architect Piero Bottoni noted in patronizing fashion in 1936 that it was not enough to design the modern apartment building, but housewives needed to be taught how to live in them<sup>8</sup>. According to Bottoni there needed to be a systematic education on how to clean, maintain, and even decorate the house. As a result, there were a variety of government sponsored wom-

<sup>8</sup> Piero Bottoni, "Per l'educazione al vivere nella casa popolare", in *Convegno Lombardo per la casa popolare nei suoi aspetti igienico-sociali* (Milano, 11-12 gennaio 1936), *Mostra della Casa Popolare*, (Milan: Reale Società Italiana di Igiene, 1936), pp. 142-145, p. 142.





**Tuberculosis sanatorium located outside the city walls on the Via dei Tufi, Siena (Photo: [www.google.com/maps](http://www.google.com/maps))**

en's organizations responsible for micro-managing domestic space. The *Fasci femminili* or Fascist women's groups, organized courses on home economics, interior decorating, and family health. Consequently domestic space became highly rationalized — maintained and managed by a government that was keenly interested in enabling the ease with which families could survive, and above all else, increase in size.

By November of 1935 Siena also had a tuberculosis sanatorium located just outside the city walls on the Via dei Tufi (still extant, but since converted into apartments). Built according to the plans of Doctor Eugenio Morelli who was active in the national fight against the illness, the five-story building could serve 203 tubercular patients exposed to sun and air for hours on end. The sanatorium, constructed by the *Istituto Nazionale Fascista della Previdenza Sociale*, was seen by the PNF as a necessary counterpart to urban renewal.

Fighting tuberculosis was a national crisis during the regime. Second to malaria, the spread of the disease was considered a scourge of existence. And much of the cause was



Louis I. Kahn (Russian-American, 1901-1974), *Towers, San Gimignano, 1928*, watercolor on paper, 12 1/8 x 9 1/4 in. (30.8 x 23.5 cm). Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, MA: Museum purchase with funds provided by an anonymous donor with the J. W. Field Fund, John B. Turner '24 Memorial Fund, Joseph O. Eaton Fund, Karl E. Weston Memorial Fund, and Bentley W. Warren Fund (94.14) Photograph by Arthur Evans.

### How Modern was the Medieval?

Tuscan hill towns have long been understood as vestigial remains of the Italian medieval and Renaissance past. And yet towns such as San Gimignano were also seen as important models for modern Architects — Louis Kahn was not alone. Frank Lloyd Wright spent the spring and summer of 1910 in Fiesole renting the Villino Belvedere (adjacent to the villa Mark Twain had rented decades before) from an English woman named Elisabeth Illingworth and was shortly thereafter inspired to design Taliesin on a hilltop with the building and nature interwed.

In addition to Siena Louis Kahn visited San Gimignano doing drawings and watercolors — some intended for publication back in the United States in the hopes of procuring clients. In the late 1950s he was able to put his study of Tuscan hill towns to use when designing the Richards Medical Laboratory at the University of Pennsylvania comprising six linked towers. For him, the overall massing of San Gimignano was modern. And during his time in Italy Eero Saarinen ventured not only to visit Bernard Berenson at I Tatti but studied materials and the relationship of forms at San Gimignano. The latter greatly influenced his design of Ezra Stiles College at Yale complete with rubble masonry, a tower and a lack of right angles.



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rooted in architecture that was overcrowded, under-ventilated, dark and dirty. In 1927 an Italian law required all provinces to coordinate anti-tubercular care. By 1928 the Ministry's Public Health Department began issuing circulars as to how tuberculosis clinics should be designed. And by 1932 the Ministry was advocating new construction rather than re-purposing existing structures. As a result anti-tubercular dispensaries that provided vaccinations and identified those who were sick were built throughout the country. Of course, sanatoria had existed in Italy for several decades, yet a greater number were built in the 1920s and '30s than ever before — more than 500 were built as a result of the 1927 law. In the Province of Siena these included large dispensaries in Cetona, Chiusi and Colle Val d'Elsa as well as smaller ones in Abbadia S. Salvatore, Asciano, Castellina, Chiusidino, Montalcino, Montepulciano, Radiocofani San Casciano dei Bagni, San Gimignano, Sinalunga and Torrenieri. The still extant Sienese *Dispensario antitubercolare* was designed by Vincenzo Monaci on the via del Fosso di Sant'Ansano (not far from the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala) in 1938.

Siena was at the center of the tuberculosis discussion for several reasons. Not only was the *risanamento* of Salicotto a nationally consumed model, but Achille Sclavo, a Professor of hygiene at the University of Siena (1898-1919) and then Florence (1918-1924) and doctor of international fame, promoted sanitary reforms, elementary school protocols, and anti-tubercular regimes as a form of preventative medicine.

It is not a coincidence that Salicotto corresponded with the historic location of the Jewish ghetto — formally established in 1570 by the Tuscan Grand Duke Cosimo I de' Medici. The neighborhood was thus associated with non-native influence and diseased bodies. Modelled on the earlier examples of ghettos in Venice, Bologna, and Rome, the Siena ghetto was gated at night — creating a kind of prophylactic space that limited interaction. To what extent *risanamiento* projects were a way to expunge Jewish ghettos in Italian cities is an open question. In Livorno the ghetto was cleared in 1929 to make way for new housing paid for by loans from the Monte dei Paschi in Siena. The pretense was to bring sunlight and air to a neighborhood ravaged by disease.

The idea to create a more hygienic space in Siena hid another Fascist agenda. The *Contrada della Torre*, which encompassed the Salicotto neighborhood, was seen as a refuge for subversive anti-fascist elements. In Siena a total of 98 people were reported to be anti-fascists. Many of these came from Salicotto. The familiar narrative of ridding the city of its diseased neighborhood is more insidious — about purging religious and political dissidents — just as Italy was becoming more anti-semitic. *Risanamento* resulted in the complete eradication of the ghetto and the purging of Siena's anti-Fascist sentiment.



The Sienese project achieved national acclaim. It was seen as a role model of healthy urban planning. Gustavo Giovannoni noted in his influential 1931 book *Vecchie Città* that the project provided an example of opening up a neighborhood while maintaining its characteristic aspects. In all of this Siena was not unique. New housing was deployed elsewhere in Italy as a way to ensure the survival of the Italian race — and one that was conveniently patriotic. In 1928 and 1929 at the same time that Salicotto was being purged, the American architect Louis Kahn was in Italy with a fellowship from the American Academy in Rome. Kahn's visit reminds us that while tourists visited and still visit the *Campo*, they rarely walk around the buildings to see what is on the other side. If they did, they would see the Salicotto neighborhood.



# **Turmoil**





negozio ariano



Sign being posted in a shop in Rome noting that the store was run by Aryans, from *Il Resto del Carlino*, December 17, 1938, p. 5

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During 11 months of German occupation 675 Tuscan Jews are known to have been deported to German concentration camps — 311 of these were from Florence, 112 from Lucca and 84 from Pistoia. Twenty-seven were children. The youngest was 4 months old. Only 15 survived. Most were arrested in late November 1943 by local Italian *carabinieri*.

While it is cliché to claim that the Italian government was kinder to Jews than the German Gestapo, this was not true. Fewer Jews lived in Italy (only 2,500 out of a population of 350,000 in Florence and 200 of a population of 49,000 in Siena in 1938), and thus fewer were deported to concentration camps — but their deaths were no less heinous. Some Jews sought refuge in local convents — such as the Carmine in Florence, where they mistakenly thought they were safe. Instead entire families were deported.

The US Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. underplays Italy's role in the persecution of what were considered to be "imperfect" and non-Aryan Others — failing to confront the fact that Italy had more than 50 internment camps spread throughout the country from Trieste to Potenza. One of these was the Renicci camp which housed 10,000 Slovenes outside Anghiari — in the heart of Piero country. No one is certain as to the number of camps as little memory survives. And yet many were the last point of internment prior to deportation to Nazi run concentration camps.

Italy's persecution of Jews, Gypsies (Sinti and Rom), Blacks and Homosexuals began before its 1940 alliance with Germany and even before the infamous Race laws of 1938. Indeed, the 1936 invasion of Ethiopia, where Italy used mustard gas against the native population, brought race to the forefront of political discussion.

When the public is introduced to the Italian atrocities of the war, it is often with complicit humor. This was certainly the case in Roberto Benigni's film *La Vita e Bella*, which among other accolades won two Oscars in 1999. Benigni, who plays Guido, an Aretine Jew, parodies a Fascist health inspector before he is shepherded away to an Italian internment camp where he eventually dies.

A huge percentage of Italians sent to Italian or German internment camps did not survive the war. The architect/photographer Giuseppe Pagano, who curated the 1936 Sixth Triennale



of Architecture held in Milan, was sent to a camp in Bolzano and subsequently Mauthausen, Austria where he died of pneumonia in April 1945. The chemist, Jew and partisan Primo Levi was arrested and sent to the Fossoli di Carpi camp near Modena. Within a few months Levi was one of 650 Italian Jews moved to Auschwitz, where he ended up working in IG Farben's Buna Werke laboratory producing synthetic rubber. He was one of only 20 to survive amongst those original 650 Italian Jews.

Since 2005 over 22,000 Italian school children have visited the death camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau under the auspices of a Turin based organization. A *Treno della Memoria* leaves Italy each year. In January of 2015, on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the infamous death camp, a train left Florence filled with more than 700 Tuscan students—Florentines, Pisans and Sienese. The train left from track #16 at the Santa Maria Novella station — the same track from which trains once left Florence bound for Auschwitz during the war. A commemorative plaque is affixed to the wall nearby.

In January 2013, at a ceremony marking Holocaust Remembrance Day in Milan, Italy's former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi praised the wartime dictator Benito Mussolini. Berlusconi noted that Italy did not have the same responsibilities as Germany — despite having promulgated the 1938 Race Laws and having deported thousands of Jews, homosexuals, political dissidents and others to Nazi-run death camps.

Berlusconi's gaffe demonstrates the extent to which Italy has long shirked responsibility for its involvement in WWII genocide. As Berlusconi famously claimed in 2003 "Mussolini never killed anyone. Mussolini used to send people on vacation in internal exile".



Have You Seen this woman?

(reward offered for the missing head of Spring by Pietro Francavilla, from the Santa Trinità bridge, 1958)

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In July of 1943 Mussolini and the PNF were deposed. By September of that year Italy broke with Germany's Nazi party. As the Allies embarked on the so-called Italian Campaign, which lasted until May 1945, they sought to reclaim the peninsula from Nazi Occupation. Landing in Sicily, the Allies pushed their way northwards liberating Rome in June 1944.

They then proceeded into Tuscany. As the Germans retreated they mined the land, something Iris Origo chronicles as she perilously walked a group of children to safety from the Villa La Foce to Montepulciano. During this period, there was little food. Survivors recount a period of intense hunger. Many children were sent away to locales where it was felt they would be safer and better fed. Paolo Luci was 6 years old when he was sent along with 2 cousins to the Tuscan village of Londa, 25 kilometers from Florence, to live with a farm family for the school year 1943-1944.

In June of 1944 Germans executed 212 men, women and children aged 1 to 84 in the village of Civitella Valdichiana about a half an hour from Arezzo. Seeking retribution for the deaths of two Germans in a skirmish with Partisans, the Germans razed almost 100 homes, burning some people alive. Similar reprisals took place in other towns around Arezzo (and elsewhere); Badicroce, Molin dei Falchi, Mulinaccio, Pietramala, San Polo, San Severo, Staggiano. As Alberto Moravia shows us in *La Ciociara*, mass rape was not uncommon. And often it was incurred by allies against allies. But, as John Foot has concluded, while such violence found a place in fiction and cinema, it has mysteriously not found a place in political narratives.

Beginning in late July 1944, residents in the Oltrarno neighborhood of Florence sought refuge from German occupation in the Pitti Palace. Nello Baroni, the architect and member of the Gruppo Toscano was among the residents and chronicled the week spent there in a diary. Carlo Levi was also in the Pitti (at the time he was living across the street writing



*Christ Stopped at Eboli*). So too was the art historian Roberto Longhi and his wife, the acclaimed writer and art historian Anna Banti.

Nello Baroni noted in his diary women cooking on makeshift stoves using green wood harvested from the Boboli Gardens managed “to knead out of unleavened flour a kind of focaccia that taste of nothing but are so indigestible they give you the illusion of being less hungry”. Water was taken from the palace’s grotto in the courtyard. And the limonaia was filled with makeshift beds.

Baroni documented the scene in the Pitti with his camera, photographing his colleagues Giovanni Michelucci and Italo Gamberini in the crowd. Amongst the 5000 people crowded into the Pitti, Michelucci was put in charge of food. Gamberini, Baroni and the architect Eduardo Detti oversaw hygiene and discipline.

During the night of August 3<sup>rd</sup> Baroni and others heard the Germans blowing up the city’s bridges including the Ponte Trinità designed by Bartolomeo Ammanati in the 1560s. As Ugo Procacci (another evacuee and the future Superintendent of Fine Arts for the region) noted, he thought it was the end of the world.

With the hope of slowing down the Allies’ northern progress the Germans bombed every bridge across the Arno except for the Ponte Vecchio. The area around the Ponte Vecchio was also destroyed — more than a dozen towers and 50 medieval palazzi — all with the intention of blocking access to the city’s only extant bridge. Amongst the buildings destroyed was the house of Anna Banti complete with a just-finished manuscript on Artemisia Gentileschi.

The American Monuments Man Frederick Hartt (one of only two monuments men for all of Tuscany) observed upon entering the city only days after German destruction that about 1/3 of medieval Florence had been demolished. “It was”, noted art historian Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti “a Piranesi nightmare”. As Hartt observed as he pulled up to the Pitti Palace in an old jeep that he had been using to canvas the Tuscan countryside:

Now the vast court was a crawling mass of unfortunate humanity. The palace of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany looked like the most crowded slum in Naples. Mothers, babies, men, boys with bundles of clothing, mattresses and a few miserable belongings, lay under the arches, swarmed through the courtyard and up the stairs, screamed from the palace windows. Sheets and clothing hung in quantities from every balcony. Here and there tables and even little charcoal stoves were set up for the preparation of pathetic meals. There was only one source of water in the palace, and there were six thousand refugees who had come to find shelter in these massive walls after the Germans had evacuated the whole section of the city along the riverbanks. Even the royal apartments had been put to use to accommodate this tide of human misery, and the romantic walks of the Boboli Gardens were used as a public toilet. It was months before the gardeners got them clean again.

*opposite*  
The bombed  
Santa Trinità  
bridge over the  
Arno River,  
Florence  
(Photo: [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk))





The famed Ponte Vecchio was reputedly saved by Gerhard Wolf, the German Consul to Florence from 1940-44, who had come to love his adopted city. His deed is commemorated by a plaque mounted by the commune in 2007 on the bridge. The fact that Wolf intervened to prevent Bernard Berenson's deportation is less well known.

Without the bridges the two sides of the city were cut off from one another. This is depicted in Roberto Rossellini's 1946 film *Paisan*, featuring an Italian Partisan and an American nurse who brave German snipers by furtively crossing the Arno through Vasari's corridor connecting the Pitti Palace to the Uffizi. Upon arriving on the other side of the river they are greeted by a group of hungry Florentines who, while pleased to hear that an Allied invasion is imminent, seem more interested in knowing if the Allies have brought any white flour.

On August 11<sup>th</sup> Florence was liberated by Allied forces. As the Germans retreated they captured and killed with wanton rage. On August 12<sup>th</sup> retreating Germans massacred 560 people including 107 children (the youngest of whom was 20 months old) and 8 pregnant women in the mountain top village of Sant'Anna di Stazzema near Lucca.

Two military cemeteries commemorate foreign efforts during the Italian campaign. Over 1600 English, Canadians, South Africans and New Zealanders are buried at the Florence War Cemetery (one of 37 British cemeteries in Italy). More than 4,400 are buried at the





**Frame enlargements from Roberto Rossellini's 1946 film, *Paisan***

American Cemetery. Many monuments, tombs, plaques, and tabernacles are spread throughout Tuscany commemorating individual resistance to Fascism.

Much of Florence's art and architecture was saved thanks to the efforts of the Monuments Men, a division of the Allied Armies established in 1943 and comprising of men and women from 13 nations. Some were art historians like Frederick Hartt. The Monuments Men accompanied the Allies identifying art works and monuments at risk. As they fought to identify and save sites and objects they also chronicled their destruction and theft including the looting of the Uffizi.

That said, parts of Tuscany were relatively unscathed. Harold Acton's family villa La Pietra, on the outskirts of Florence, had been occupied by Fascist troops during the war. According to Acton the peacocks that once roamed the yard had been eaten and the garden statuary castrated; and yet, the villa and its contents were largely intact.

After the war, Italy did its best to erase evidence of PNF rule and the government's alliance with Nazi Germany — removing lictor rods, Roman eagles, large Ms (for Mussolini) and EF (era fascista) year designations, toppling sculpture as was done with the equestrian statue of Mussolini in Bologna, renaming streets, piazzas and buildings that honored Fascists. Perhaps the most obvious censorship took place in Signa where Adolfo Coppedè had designed a Casa del Fascio in 1928 with large fasci, lictor rods and large Imperial triumphal columns. This was one of 5,000 Fascist party headquarters built throughout Italy during Fascism. The building, still extant and now owned by the municipality, was stripped of its Fascist emblems after the war. Today there is nothing that would indicate its prior use. This is similar to what happened in other Tuscan towns: Arezzo, Barberino val d'Elsa, Chiusi, Gaiole in Chianti, Massa Marittima, Montevarchi, Pienza, Querceta (in the province of Lucca) and Vinci. In each case the Fascist-era head-





quarters building still exists and is still in use, typically owned by the commune — serving as police stations (Vinci and Pienza), state archives (Arezzo), libraries (Barberino val d'Elsa), tourism offices (Querceta), Government offices (Montevarchi) or extensions of the local museum (Chiusi).

Since the war, scholars have typically seen the *ventennio*, or 20-year period of Fascist rule as an aberration — removed from what came before and after. This de-contextualization has prevented a full understanding of the period and place.

During the post war period architects were dedicated to rebuilding Florence and its region. Nello Baroni worked with the Superintendent restoring damaged buildings. He won the competition to rebuild the Ponte alla Vittoria with Italo Gamberini. He also developed master plans for several Tuscan towns including Castiglion Fiorentino, Prato and Forte dei Marmi; had been heavily damaged. Eduardo Detti and Giovanni Michelucci (both of whom had sought refuge in the Pitti) re-designed the Ponte alla Grazie, which was inaugurated in 1957. In the late 1940s Italo Gamberini designed new buildings on the streets around the Ponte Vecchio.

In 1948 a committee was set up to oversee the reconstruction of the Ponte Trinità. Bernard Berenson was the president. He secured \$50,000 from the New York-based Kress Foundation for the project and a quarry was re-opened in the Boboli Gardens to provide stone for the reconstruction. Following the war the US based Parker Pen Company offered a \$3,000 reward for the return of the missing head of one of the four statues that had graced the bridge. Their "Wanted" poster was circulated widely in many languages, although the reward went unclaimed. The head was recovered in 1961 from the Arno. The post-war era was marked by intense poverty — the result of both the war and pre-war neglect. Hunger, joblessness, and oppression defines period Neo-Realist films by de Sica, Rosel-





**Deane Keller with the head of Cosimo I de' Medici at Poggio a Caiano, outside Florence**  
(Photo: Deane Keller Papers, Yale University Manuscripts & Archives)

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### **The Monuments Men + the Gothic Line**

During WWII the Allies targeted Pisa. The Tuscan city was an important industrial and transportation hub. It was the location of Germany's last defensive stand in the Italian campaign — the Gothic line which extended from Pisa to Rimini included an anti-tank wall, bunkers, tunnels and trenches. Remnants of the line can best be seen around the town of Borgo a Mazzano north of Lucca. The "line" was largely built by Italian laborers in exchange for avoiding imprisonment or deportation to Germany. The American Buffalo soldiers, the only all Black division to see combat during the war, successfully broke through the Gothic Line.

In 1943 and 1944 over 50 Allied bombing raids destroyed a quarter of the city of Pisa. Three bridges were demolished. Factories were razed. Two hundred thousand homes were reduced to rubble. Over 1700 people died. By the summer of 1944 over half of the population that remained had fled. According to Frederick Hartt, Pisa resembled "a landscape on the moon".

On July 27, 1944 Allied bombs hit the Camposanto — the Gothic cemetery begun in the

*opposite*  
**Deane Keller,  
Leaning Tower  
of Pisa, 1944**  
(Photo: Deane  
Keller Papers,  
Yale University  
Manuscripts &  
Archives)



late 13<sup>th</sup> century as a part of the famed Cathedral-Leaning Tower-Baptistery complex. The ceiling rafters burned, the lead roof melted, and fire consumed the frescos of Benozzo Gozzoli, Andrea Bonaiuti, Antonio Veneziano, Spinello Aretino, and Taddeo Gaddi among others. This was one of the most devastating losses of art in Tuscany during WW II. Monuments man Deane Keller, an art professor at Yale in his civilian life, attempted to salvage what remained and piece together fresco fragments.

During WWII, Keller, along with Frederick Hartt, was responsible for identifying works of art in Tuscany, protecting them against combat and looting, and organizing any necessary repairs — as

Keller did in Pienza and Hartt did in Arezzo, San Gimignano and Siena. Their responsibilities did not include restoration. As Hartt noted, the repair of plaster could wait. Gaping holes in roofs could not. Rain water pouring through the bomb-damaged roof of the Collegiata in San Gimignano needed repairs. As did the roof of San Francesco in Arezzo. Separately Keller and Hartt canvassed the region — assessing damage and coming to know sites better than anyone else. Keller alone drove more than 8,000 miles in four months through war-torn Tuscany! Hartt claims that he drove upwards of 40,000 miles. In most cases they were the first individuals to record being on the scene — driving circuitous routes at slow speeds to get to sites. It was this way that Hartt was able to report in September of 1944 that all of Piero della Francesca's known paintings had emerged from the war unscathed.

Deane and Hartt were among 48 American and British Monuments Men in Europe. Those with a particular knowledge of Italian art and culture were stationed in Italy. Keller was a former Rome Prize recipient, Frederick Hartt was a young art historian and former Yale University curator, and fellow Monuments Man Cecil Pinsent had been responsible for the design of gardens, villas and farmhouses throughout the region.

In his capacity as a Monuments Man, Keller like Hartt drafted lists and maps of sites to be avoided during hostilities. Their list was drawn from the Baedeker guidebook as well as TCI's







**Frederick Hartt in front of his jeep Lucky 13 watching the return of the equestrian monument of Cosimo I de Medici to its pedestal in the Piazza Signoria, Florence, February 16th, 1945**

(Photo: Deane Keller Papers, Yale University Manuscripts & Archives)

**opposite Frederick Hartt, Livorno, January 1945**

(Photo: Frederick Hartt Papers, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Gallery Archives. 28MFAA-D8\_13994\_002)

24-volume *Guida d'Italia*. As a part of these efforts Keller, along with fellow Monuments Man Charles Bernholz, took more than 12,000 photographs — an important archive of Tuscan art.

To avoid destruction and looting, many works of art were moved for safekeeping. Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* and Leonardo da Vinci's *Adoration of the Magi* were esconced in the Castle of Poppi. Sculpture from the Bargello was hidden near Bibbiena. Pontormo's *Deposition* from the church of Santa Felicità in Florence was removed to the Castle of Montegufoni. And Giambologna's 16<sup>th</sup>-century bronze equestrian statue of Cosimo I de Medici, which once graced the Piazza della Signoria, was hidden in the garden of Poggio a Caiano. All told there were 37 repositories of paintings and sculpture that had been moved for safekeeping. Other works were protected in situ. Michelangelo's *David* and *Slaves* for example were enclosed in brick capsules.

While Keller oversaw the return of the Giambologna equestrian figure to the Florentine Piazza della Signoria after the war, other works suffered a more tortuous journey. In the summer of 1944 the Germans stole 600 works hidden in Tuscan deposits in Montagnana, Poggio a Caiano, Poppi, Soci and Dicomano. Included amongst the loot bound for Germany was Michelangelo's *Bacchus* and Donatello's *David*. The works were discovered less than a year later in German deposits located in the northernmost Italian province of Alto Adige.









## Rodolfo Siviero Saves Tuscan Art

Rodolfo Siviero (1911-1983) was known as the James Bond of the European art world for his effort repatriating works of art stolen from Italy during WWII. As a secret agent for Italian Army Intelligence Siviero moved to Germany under the pretense of being an art student. First as a pro-Fascist and later as a collaborator with the Partisans and Allies, Siviero kept tabs on Italian art that was illegally removed from Italy.

Mussolini gave away or sold masterpieces to high ranking German officials hoping to curry favor. German soldiers took hundreds of paintings and sculptures from the Uffizi, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Florence, and museums in Naples, Rome and elsewhere—relocating many works of art to the Southern Tyrol Castle of Taufers, some at the personal request of Hermann Goering and

many destined for the personal residences of Nazi leaders. In total almost 2000 works of art were purloined. Almost all were recovered.

Siviero is credited with repatriating Titian's *Danae*, Tintoretto's *Leda*, Masaccio's *Madonna con Bambino* and the *Lancelotti Discobolus*, which Hitler had coveted at the Museo Borghese in Rome during his visit in 1938. In 1984 an exhibition was held at the Palazzo Vecchio in honor of Siviero's efforts. Today, his house in Florence can be visited as a museum.

**Rodolfo Siviero examines a painting by Jacopo Pontormo, c. 1950**

(Photo: WIKIPEDIA)





Carrying the coffins of the Fascist martyrs to the crypt of Santa Croce, Florence, 1934  
(Photo: Foto Locchi 1934\_L359-5)

### **Censoring Fascist Martyrs and Re-writing Christianity: the Crypts of Santa Croce + San Domenico + the Saints**

The first ceremony honoring Fascist martyrs was held in Bologna in 1932 for 53 soldiers. Twelve men were buried in Rome in 1933. A ceremony in Florence followed, then Arezzo, Ferrara, and Siena. In the cases of Florence, Ferrara and Siena the martyrs were buried within a church in a space typically reserved for saints or nobility. During a ritualistic role call at the ceremonial funeral, each martyr was declared to be *Presente!* — boldly proclaimed above the wall of the stone coffins.

In 1934, 37 Fascist martyrs were interred in the crypt of the church of Santa Croce. Alessandro Pavolini (former PNF leader from Florence), Ugo Ojetti (influential art critic), architect Alfredo Lensi (director of the Ufficio delle Belli Arti), Paolo Venerosi Pesciolini (Florence Podestà), Giovanni Poggi (Superintendent of medieval and Modern Art) all played a role in ensuring the timely completion of the crypt with its austere coffins in a church considered to be the final resting place of the pantheon of Italian heroes such as Michelangelo, Dante and Galileo. The Shrine of the Fascist Martyrs was inaugurated in the presence of Mussolini and other PNF officials and was broadcast on the radio throughout Italy. It was the first stopping point for Hitler and Mussolini in 1938.

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**Arca Roselli,  
via dei Pileati,  
Arezzo**  
(Photo: Fotoclub  
la Chimera  
05.480)

Achille Starace, the PNF secretary, was present for the 1938 inauguration and initiated the roll call.

These sites have each long since been censored. The Florentine crypt was stripped of any Fascist associations in 1946. The bodies of the deceased were secretly transferred to various cemeteries. In 1950 the crypt was renovated and the sarcofaghi were sold for 5,000 lire. The Arca Roselli and Sienese crypt were destroyed at the end of the war. The Christ sculpture in Siena was relocated to a local cemetery and the martyrs were reburied.

The choice of building Fascist sacrari in the crypts of the Sienese church associated with St. Catherine and the Franciscan church of Santa Croce is strategic. Fascism presented itself as a religious cult, appropriating Catholic rituals where and when it could.

In 1939 St. Francis of Assisi and St. Catherine of Siena were jointly named the patron saints of Italy by Pope Pius XII. As individuals who renounced worldly possessions and tended to the sick and starving, both appealed to Italy's poor. Francis devoted himself to a life of poverty, renounced traditional clothing, carried no money, fasted and walked barefoot in the countryside. He made poverty and hunger desirable and the life of the poor

In 1936 the architect Giuseppe Castellucci designed a small public park across from the restored Palazzo Pretorio and down the street from the Casa del Fascio in Arezzo. The garden was dedicated to the memory of three local Fascist soldiers. In the center of the park was the so-called Arca Roselli, a monument (designed to replicate a 14<sup>th</sup>-century tomb) dedicated to the memory of Carlo Roselli who had been killed at the battle of Gorizia in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region of northeastern Italy).

Two years later a Fascist sacrario was created to honor 10 fallen soldiers reinterred in the renovated crypt of the church of San Domenico (long associated with St. Catherine) in Siena. A large sculpture of the resurrected Christ by Vico Consorti hovered over the altar.





**Sacrario dei Caduti, Siena, 1934** (Photo: [www.artefascista.it](http://www.artefascista.it))

hungry peasant something aspirational. His followers venerated poverty in as much as they felt that money and riches corrupted the soul.

Catherine, a Dominican tertiary and mystic who “married” Christ, was one of the few to receive the stigmata. She was an important advocate of clerical reform and in turn proved an important role model for what were to be self-sacrificing Fascist women. She fasted, cut her hair so as not to appear vain, and gave away her clothing to the poor. Her prolific mother gave birth to 25 children. Her declaration as a national patron saint was the culmination of decades of lobbying by various Siennese officials. Already by the 1930s she was the patron saint of various organizations.

In St. Catherine as well as Saint Francis we see Fascism’s successful coercion and manipulation of Catholicism. Fascism was eager to become a cult. Already by 1929 Mussolini had signed the Lateran Accord with Pope Pius XI ensuring that the Catholic church would support the PNF.

Both Francis and Catherine were charismatic — boasting many followers. When they were



made the country's patron saints millions of Italians were poor and hungry and their lives were re-scripted to reflect contemporary cultural anxieties. It was argued by the government that both saints would inspire soldiers and ultimately encourage peace. Prayers were held in 1935 and 1936 at the church of Santa Caterina in Fontebranda in Siena asking Catherine to intercede on behalf of Italian soldiers in Ethiopia. The mothers of Sienese soldiers serving in East Africa even sent copies of sacred relics to churches frequented by Italians in the region. As such, the saints became national models for public engagement. They were of importance outside their region.

In many ways the legacy of Saints Francis and Catherine is carried on in that of Pope Pius, a Franciscan, who is more wildly venerated in Italy than any other Pope.

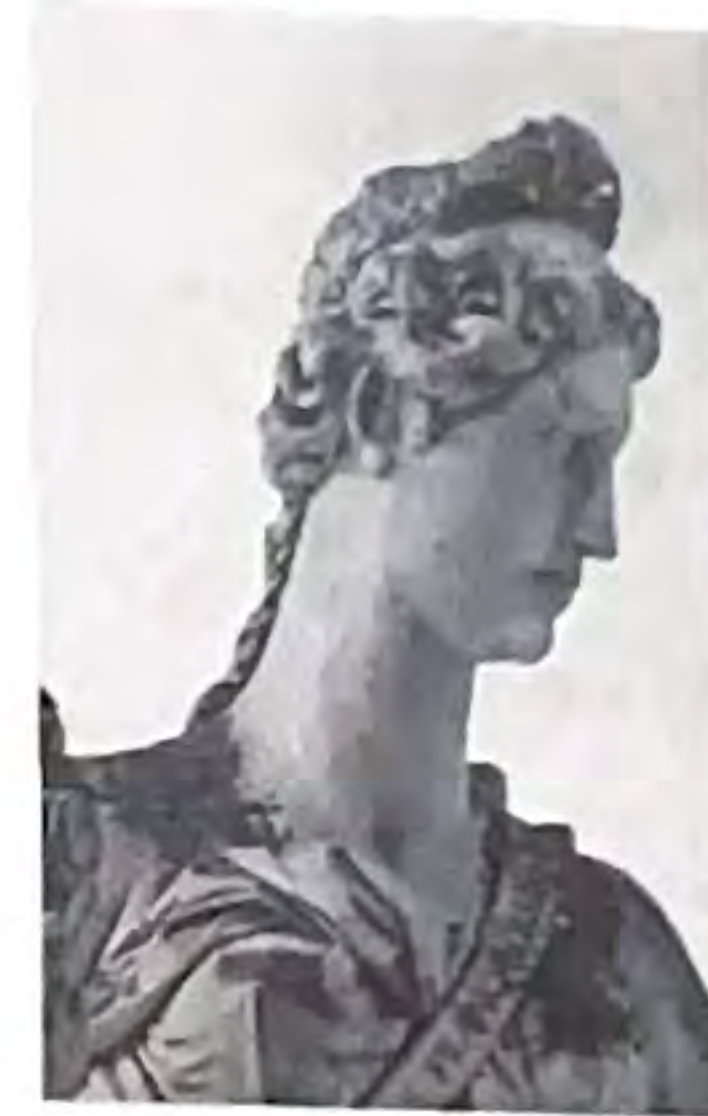
Francis and Catherine were not the only saints to provide solace to the poor and hungry. Maria Goretti, an 11-year old girl from Nettuno was canonized by Pope Pius XII in 1950 — at a time when Italy was in the throes of another period of mass emigration. In many ways, Maria was an inspiration. She grew up in a poor sharecropping family to become the patron saint of poverty.



Parker Pens, poster printed in different languages offering a reward of \$3,000 for the return of the head of the statue Primavera from the Santa Trinità bridge, Florence  
(from *The Rotarian*, vol 97, No. 4, October 1960, p. 23)

lini, and Visconti. As Italy struggled to rebuild, films such as de Sica's 1948 *Bicycle Thief* characterized a genre that relied heavily upon unprofessional actors and real locations that were often dilapidated urban wastelands. Much of Tuscany lacked running water, indoor plumbing or electricity. Indeed, in 1951 less than 7.5% of Italian households could boast such amenities. Pasolini's 1961 film *Accattone* about a struggling Roman pimp shows us a fleeting glimpse of derelict communal outdoor bathrooms. This film like others of the period echoed the rhetoric of native honesty that had pervaded the photographic documentation of the Tuscan countryside in the 1930s. Throughout the 1950s more movie stars from Italy appeared on the cover of *Life* magazine than from any other country. Gina Lollobrigida, Anna Maria Pierangeli, and Sophia Loren were all desirable exports—voluptuous, smoldering Latin lovers. The fact that these women gained fame by playing hard-working poor women (a farmer, peasant, fishmonger and rice picker in the case of Silvana Mangano) reinforces the romanticized idea that Italy was simple and primitive. *Life* magazine even received complaints from readers when they attempted to dress up the Italian women. The message was clear; Italian women were to be exported as beautiful but disheveled. Even the talented Mangano—who was crowned Miss Rome in 1946—consistently cultivated a notion of rustic beauty rather than beauty queen. Many of the movie stars were dressed by the newly launched Atelier Carosa founded in Rome in 1947 by Giovanna Caracciolo Ginetti. The Atelier participated in the first fashion show held in the Palazzo Pitti in 1955. During this time the Marshall Plan (named after George Marshall, the US Secretary of State) helped alleviate some of Italy's suffering. Beginning in 1948 more than 12 billion dollars was directed towards war-ravaged European countries to facilitate rebuilding efforts.

## HAVE YOU SEEN THIS WOMAN?



### 3,000 DOLLAR REWARD

OFFERED BY THE PARKER PEN COMPANY  
FOR THE RECOVERY OF THE "HEAD OF SPRING"  
FOR THE PEOPLE OF FLORENCE, ITALY

#### DESCRIPTIVE DATA:

Age: about 350 years

Color: marble white

Size: about 20 inches

Weight: about 120 lbs.

Distinguishing marks: the tip of the nose, previously damaged, is probably broken.

**BACKGROUND:** The statue of "Spring", which since 1888 guarded the access to Florence's Santa Trinita bridge, was demolished along with the bridge itself on August 4th 1944 as a military measure. After 13 years of intense and painstaking work, the bridge—which found its inspiration in Michelangelo and Ammannati—has been reconstructed "where it was, as it was". Ten of these 13 years were spent in just putting together the various remnants of the bridge and in assuring that the reconstruction would not vary in the slightest detail from the original.

The recently completed reconstruction has been heralded by the whole world as an artistic and engineering triumph. Only one detail mars its perfection—the statue of "Spring" is headless, the many years of search failing to bring its head to light.

All sorts of theories have been formulated regarding its whereabouts. However, the various leads pointing to its presence in Italy have been carefully traced and all have proven to be false. This fact lends strength to the general belief that the head was removed from Florence immediately after the destruction of the Santa Trinita bridge by some souvenir-seeking soldier. If this is the case, the Head of Spring could be anywhere in the world, and for this reason The Parker Pen Company has offered the services of its world-wide organization so that the greatest number of people of all lands can be asked:—

**HAVE YOU SEEN THIS WOMAN?**





**Casa del Fascio,  
Lastra a Signa,  
1925 (Photo:  
Guido Sancisi)**

Food, fuel and other goods were distributed widely and technical experts traveled to Europe to impart their knowledge. Funding allocations were determined by the level of war-time destruction and so Italy received more funds than Germany.

One of the Marshall Plan initiatives was to promote tourism. As Senator J. William Fulbright argued in 1950, tourism efficiently broke down barriers. The American government promoted middle class tourism and Italians facilitated it on the ground through an infrastructure of support organizations. Hotels and attractions destroyed during the war were rebuilt. New airports were constructed. Although Italy was not as organized as France, where tourism officials encouraged restaurant owners to serve ice water at meals and hotels to make hot water available at all times as a means of meeting American expectations, middle class tourism to Italy increased dramatically. By 1952 tourist class airfares were introduced, thanks in part to the efforts of the Civil Aeronautics Board, which regulated US air travel, and the efforts of Pan Am's president Juan Trippe.

Senator Fulbright also founded the Fulbright Fellowship program in 1946 — intended to promote peace through educational exchange. Foreign countries which had amassed debt during the war could forgo payment in exchange for funding an international exchange program in which Americans were sent abroad.

**opposite  
Casa del Fascio,  
Lastra a Signa,  
after censorship  
(Photo; Forum  
NikonClub.it)**





In 1947 over two million people were unemployed in Italy. An unknown number were underemployed. The country was considered socially unstable — on par with Greece and Ireland. Since the national economy was heavily based on agriculture, an important component of the Marshall Plan in Italy was to spur agrarian reform. US technicians were sent to promote mechanization and the use of fertilizers, because the Food and Agricultural Division of the U.S. embassy analyzed agricultural production and decided that it was the root cause of intense poverty. Tuscans were malnourished, housing conditions were poor, and workers were referred to as human donkeys.

In the 1948 elections, post-war political parties were invested in revitalizing the agricultural sector. In some parts of the country this meant redistributing land in order to lay the foundations for modern agricultural systems. By 1949 a series of agricultural reforms were underway. And yet during the winter of 1949 and 1950 peasant revolts took place throughout the country. The then Christian Democratic government responded in a series of state reforms. In 1954 the American blockbuster *Three Coins in the Fountain* showed that Italy was once again a safe and desirable place to vacation. The film, which was nominated for a Best Picture Oscar and won for best song and cinematography, was a romantic comedy featuring three American secretaries who ate, shopped, and loved their way across Rome. While it was





Frame enlargement *The Decameron*, Pier Paolo Pasolini dir. 1971. Pasolini plays the role of Giotto

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**Pasolini**

In 1971 Pier Paolo Pasolini adapted nine stories from Boccaccio's "Decameron" for film. In typical fashion, Pasolini satirized the church and called attention to poverty while heavily eroticizing the drama. Shot largely in Naples, amidst dark narrow streets and squalid housing, the film reminds the audience of the realities of life. The preponderance of bad teeth and use of dialect underscores the post-war legacy of bad nutrition and poor economies. Pasolini himself plays Giotto in the film — painting the walls of the Arena chapel in Padua.

Perhaps equally important is the way in which Pasolini's work recalls that of Caravaggio — the everyday quality of life on display, the violence and homosexuality all underscore the extent to which Pasolini drew upon the painter whose work he studied with Roberto Longhi at the University of Bologna and then later in Florence.





**Trippaio, Florence** (Photo: Cosimo Lipparini)

### **Trippa – Eating a Cow's Stomach**

La trippa Fiorentina, can be made from the stomach lining of various farm animals — although typically from a cow. It is a classic Tuscan dish prepared with tomatoes, onion, celery, carrots, olive oil and parmesan. It was already recorded in the 15<sup>th</sup>-century cookbook of Maestro Martino *Arte coquinaria*. Martino passed the recipe on to Bartolomeo Sacchi whose fame ensured that it attained a secure place in Italian gastronomy. Pellegrino Artusi noted in the 1922 edition of his classic cookbook that one way to cook the delicate stomach lining was to cut the tripe into strips, fry it and serve it with tomato sauce. Another recipe included cooking tripe with the foot of a cow.

Today many eat tripe in the form of a lampredotto sandwich made by one of the city's *trippai*, or tripe vendors. Lampredotto is a kind of tripe made from a cow's fourth stomach, cooked in broth, sliced, and served with salsa verde in a sandwich.

Dan Brown noted in his 2014 book *Inferno*, "I pass behind the palazzo with its crenellated tower and one-handed clock ... snaking through the early-morning vendors in Piazza di San Firenze with their hoarse voices smelling of lampredotto and roasted olives".

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Models for the  
Carosa Fashion  
House, 1955  
(Photo: Alinari  
TCI-S-001370-  
AR09)



not a great film by any stretch, it was one of 100 films—many of which were American—shot in Italy in the mid 1950s. *Roman Holiday* starring Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck (1953) was another. Even if Peck, who assumed the role of a reporter, lived in an apartment that would be considered far from glamorous, his life outside was filled with nighttime dancing, scenic vespa rides, and restful coffees. Such films conveyed the idea that Italy was elegant—its culture refined, its people charming, its lifestyle glamorous. The U.S. audience was intrigued with Italian culture—a point reinforced by Darryl



Zannuck's 1956 film the *Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* in which Gregory Peck plays an American GI who cannot dispel his wartime memories of Italy and the woman he loved. This interest was undoubtedly fueled by the presence of Claire Boothe Luce in Italy. As the first female American ambassador (from 1953-56) she cut a striking image. Her activities were widely reported in the popular press in the US — further cultivating a fascination with Italy and Italian culture.

Italy was also obsessed with the US — confirmed by the crowds gathered to witness the motorcade transporting a newly betrothed Tyrone Power and Linda Christian in Rome in 1949 in what was called “the wedding of the century”. A thousand riot police were deployed to hold back the crowds. Christian's wedding dress, with its eight-yard train, was designed by the Sorelle Fontane in Rome, was featured on the cover of *Life* magazine, and arguably launched the MADE-IN-ITALY craze. Power and Hepburn epitomized glamour in a glamorous place. By 1960 Federico Fellini had coined Italian life the *dolce vita*. By then Italians, and those who admired all things Italian were consumed by sex and style. It was as if Marinetti's Futurist *donna elettrizzante* had been reborn. Not surprisingly, the glass vitrine outside Foto Locchi, a popular photography store in the Piazza Repubblica in Florence, as well as at other newsstands was filled with movie star head shots.

Under the Marshall Plan new manufacturers were put into business and old industries were revitalized. It was under these conditions that Milan re-emerged as a producer of International-style furniture, FIAT was given a boost and Florence became a fashion capital. By some accounts, industrial production increased 89% during the 1950s.

As can be expected, throughout the period there was a dramatic increase in consumption coupled with a 32% increase in commercial employment. Italians were producing and consuming more. According to statistics an unprecedented 110,000 refrigerators and 80,000 vacuum cleaners were purchased in 1954. This was a period of an economic boom — and an increasingly urban world in which Italian citizenship was defined in terms of domestic consumption. What Italians consumed in their kitchens and living rooms became a political project. And yet, when the Compagnia Nazionale Artigiana sent 2,500 items to be exhibited in the show *Italy at Work: Her Renaissance in Design Today*, which travelled to 12 American museums including the Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo, the Chicago Art Institute, and the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh over three years beginning in 1950, an Olivetti typewriter and a Lambretta Scooter were on exhibit but the emphasis was on high-end handicrafts. Ceramics, embroidered textiles and blown glass were intended to show the American people that Italian artisanal traditions had survived the war and that such goods were at the forefront of Italian design.



Foto Locchi store  
front in Piazza  
Repubblica,  
Florence 1947  
(Photo: Foto  
Locchi 1947\_  
L855-1)



In 1957 the first American-style supermarkets opened in Italy by a New York (IBEC) company founded by Nelson Rockefeller. Three stores opened in Milan under the name Supermarkets Italiani. While there had been a few large-scale chain stores for retail goods — la Rinascente founded in 1877 and Standa launched in 1931, there was no chain supermarket. The idea was novel and on opening day there was a continuous crowd eager to enter. A fourth store, designed by Gio Ponti, was opened in 1959. Five stores opened in Florence in 1961. By 1971 there were 607 supermarkets in all of Italy. The chain continues today under the name Esselunga.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s Italians were learning how to be consumers of things ranging from food to appliances. Meanwhile members of the Arte Povera movement were busy critiquing consumption.





Michelangelo Pistoletto, *Venere degli Stracci (Venus of the Rags)*, 1967, 1974, Marble and textiles, 83.5 x 133.9 x 43.3 inches (212 x 340 x 110 cm) (Photo: © Michelangelo Pistoletto; Courtesy of the artist, Luhring Augustine, New York, Galleria Christian Stein, Milan, and Simon Lee Gallery, London / Hong Kong)

### Arte Povera

Michelangelo Pistoletto, a leader of the Arte Povera movement, calls attention to the Italy hidden in plain sight, in his 1967 installation *Venere degli Stracci* or *Venus of the rags* a play in contrasts. Using a plaster cast of a neo-classical sculpture, Pistoletto positions the figure of Venus so that we only see her backside. In her anonymity she reminds us of many other Venuses — including the famous Medici Venus once housed in the Uffizi's Tribuna. The comparisons are endless: neoclassical decadence and beauty with ordinary misery, the sublime with the everyday, the absence of color with its presence, singularity with the superabundance of consumerism.

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Looking  
towards  
Piazza Santa  
Trinità,  
November  
4, 1966.  
The Palazzo  
Spini Feroni  
is on the  
right  
(Photo:  
Balthazar  
Korab  
Archive,  
Library of  
Congress,  
Washington  
D.C.)

[The flood was] something unhuman, terrible like war  
(Richard Burton, *Florence: November 4, 1966*)

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The flood of Florence on November 4 1966 was a turning point in the history of Italian art and architecture. It was the worst flood in Florence since 1333. Unprecedented rains caused two dams in the Arno valley, north of Arezzo to overflow and water to race towards Florence. This, combined with an increase in water run-off in the Apennines (where the Arno starts), caused the river to flood its banks. While towns along the river were affected, no place was as ravaged as Florence.

Although flood waters inundated the city for only 12 hours, the effects lasted for years. The city was unprepared. There were no emergency services in place. Only the wealthy had flood insurance. And the vast majority of the population was unaware of the impending disaster. November 4<sup>th</sup> was a city-wide holiday — meaning that many businesses were closed and residents were out of town. While many lives were spared as a result, salvaging precious goods inside locked buildings was difficult.

When the Arno overflowed its banks, people mobilized to save the city. The inundation damaged the State Archives, the Uffizi storerooms where medieval and Renaissance paintings, sculptures and frescoes were housed, the National Library, the church and piazza of Santa Croce where there was more than 22 feet of water, and countless other spaces.

One hundred and one people lost their lives. Fifteen hundred works of art were damaged or destroyed, color from the 14<sup>th</sup>-century illuminated manuscripts housed in the Cathedral Museum was washed away and 20,000 Florentines lost their homes, 15,000 cars were destroyed. 6,000 shops went out of business, the entire collection of the Gabinetto Vieusseux facing the via Tornabuoni was damaged, as were 1.3 million items at the National Library and more than a third of the contents of the Archivio di Stato. The so-called Mud Angels formed bucket brigades, scholars raised funds while others worked on the ground in Florence, orchestrating the distribution of donated equipment — everything from shovels to generators.

As the art critic Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, noted “The damage caused by the Arno river



Boating through the flooded streets of Florence, *Life Magazine*, November 18, 1966  
(Photo: *Life Magazine*)



opposite  
Water-logged  
books in the  
Biblioteca  
Nazionale,  
Florence, *Life Magazine*,  
November 18, 1966  
(Photo: *Life Magazine*)

flood... was much greater than this art jewel city suffered in WWII"<sup>1</sup>. Cristina Acidini, deputy superintendent for fine arts in Florence, observed on the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the flood, "In Florence, they were able to move the entire collection of the Uffizi into deposits before the bombardments began in World War II. But there was no warning given for the 1966 flood. And that one night was enough to create an enormous disaster from which we are still trying to recover"<sup>2</sup>.

The architectural historian Juergen Schulz arrived in Florence only a few days before the flood, intending to spend the year working on a project under the auspices of a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship. He would never work on his own research during his time in Florence. Instead he devoted his energies to CRIA, the Committee to Rescue Italian Art. Launched in the United States in response to the flood, CRIA worked in partnership with Italian Institutions to save and restore the region's cultural heritage. CRIA was not alone. Other international groups were involved including UNESCO, Germans, Austrians, French, Scots, British, and Dutch. An Italian committee, lead by Ragghianti and Florentine mayor Piero Bargellini helped raise awareness and funds. Based in an unheated office in the Palazzo Vecchio, Schulz coordinated donations. He

<sup>1</sup> Henry Gaggiotini, "Help of Art Lovers Asked by Florence" *Chicago Tribune*, November 12, 1966, page 1.  
<sup>2</sup> Ken Shulman, "30 Years Later, Florence Warily Watches the Arno", *The New York Times*, February 9, 1997.





was not alone in volunteering his efforts to CRIA. Fellow art and architecture historians such as Brown University professor Bates Lowry (future director of MoMA and founding director of the National Building Museum in D.C.) and his colleague Fred Licht. Sidney J. Freedberg (a Harvard Professor who helped transform Bernard Berenson's Villa I Tatti into Harvard's Center for Renaissance Studies), James Ackerman (the Harvard art historian and one of the Monuments Men during WWII) and Rudolf Wittkower (the German born Baroque art historian), as well as historians such as Paul Oscar Kristeller, a professor at Columbia University, Felix Gilbert and I Tatti's director, Myron P. Gilmore were all involved. Frederick Hartt, the former Monuments Man, who would write an influential textbook on Renaissance art, was summoned by CRIA to prioritize restoration efforts. Princeton art historian Millard Meiss ran CRIA's office in the States, raising money for the recovery effort. The Florentine filmmaker Franco Zeffirelli directed a documentary about the flood (with harrowing footage of people being rescued off of rooftops by helicopters) in hopes of raising awareness and money in the international community. Released only a month after the disaster and narrated in Italian by the legendary Richard Burton, who happened to be shooting a movie in Rome, the film reputedly raised more than \$20 million dollars. Immediate salvage efforts took several weeks while most of Florence was without water and electricity. But in truth some restoration work went on for years. And some is not yet finished.





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### **The Brutalist Archivio di Stato**

Tuscan architecture in the 1960s and 1970s recalled the dialogues of primitive art held decades before. The unrefined surfaces of buildings such as Michellucci's 1960 church of the Autostrada or Gamberini's 1972 Archivio di Stato are undeniably New Brutalist in style. These buildings are also in dialogue with the rough surfaces of unfinished buildings such as San Lorenzo. Florentines, like other Tuscans, were predisposed to seeing rough building surface as they encountered several unfinished facades in the city.

They constitute artisanal architecture through materiality — unfinished concrete, untreated copper and stone (in the case of the church). By using simple materials in unpretentious ways these buildings have a sense of honesty that was in keeping with 1930s rhetoric of the Florence School. They provided a modern update to the unpolished nature of native vernacular construction.

Their rugged and austere appearance — blocks of Pietra Forte in the case of Michellucci's church or hard-edged concrete in the case of the Archivio di Stato — were decidedly anti bourgeois. There is nothing superfluous about these buildings. And yet they are both monumental and sculptural in appearance. They are confident in both material and form. Their raw, unprocessed quality recalls the vernacular farm buildings photographed by Baroni and Berardi in the 1930s. Their uncompromising character — severe in its materiality — reminds the viewer of the lack of comfort evidenced by those who worked the Tuscan landscape. There was nothing easy about these buildings. There was no levity. As such, both buildings exuded a sense of honesty.

The buildings are essentially populist. A church built for those traveling along the Autostrada del Sole (the highway built in the late 1950s, connecting Milan with Naples via Florence) and the archive, built in response to the damages caused by the flood of 1966 were both built for the public.



About a third of the items damaged in the National Library have yet to be salvaged as indicated by the call number “*alluvionato*” or flooded.

One obvious consequence of the flood was the development of a new-found expertise in restoration. Umberto Baldini, tasked with managing the restoration of more than 1,000 works, trained hundreds of artisans to dry, clean and restore works of art and in the process developed a technique to detach frescoes from church walls so as to protect them from corrosive salts leaching through the masonry. His most famous undertaking involved Cimabue's 13<sup>th</sup>-century crucifix installed in the church of Santa Croce. Over 60% of the painting was destroyed by the flood's raging muddy and oily waters. He led a team of restorers for ten years to restore the painting.

The flood also prompted further creation of copies of important works of art. Five bronze panels of Ghiberti's 15<sup>th</sup>-century Gates of Paradise on the Eastern door of the Baptistery had been dislodged. Scratched and covered with mud, the panels were found against the wrought iron gate surrounding the door. Copies were made and the originals were moved to the Museum of the Duomo.

Another consequence of the flood was serious scholarship. Meiss' study on fresco painting was published shortly after the flood and was a direct result of studying the *sinopie*, or under drawings for frescoes in the church of Santa Croce — a study that was only possible due to the destruction wrought by the flood.

Following the flood, discussions ensued regarding the relocation of the Archivio di Stato, housed in the Uffizi, and the National Library, situated adjacent to Santa Croce and facing the Arno.

Both had suffered significant damage. While the library did not move, the Archive did — to a new structure designed in the early 1970s by Italo Gamberini — one of the members of the Gruppo Toscano responsible for the Santa Maria Novella train station in Florence.

In addition, the Bilancino dam was built near Florence, a spillway was constructed at Pontedra, emergency lights were installed in Florence's low-lying neighborhoods to alert citizens of rising waters, and international awareness of preservation and conservation increased with more than 2,000 organizations created in the years after the flood.



**Made by Hand  
(slowly)**







Olive  
Garden,  
William-  
sport, PA  
(Photo:  
Author)

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The *Olive Garden*, founded in 1982, is the principal venue by which Americans have become familiar with Tuscan food and wine outside of Tuscany. The chain recognized the significance of connecting the place (Tuscany) with its food. For well over a decade beginning in 1999 Olive Garden's "culinary institute" or training center was located in the 11<sup>th</sup>-century village of Riserva di Fizzano outside Castellina in Chianti (in the off season this was used for *agriturismo*). It was here that the popular restaurant chain developed new recipe ideas and trained its best chefs and managers in the art of cooking. Chefs were even escorted on buying trips to the San Lorenzo food market in Florence. As the company boasted, this was their cultural immersion program. And not surprisingly, the Olive Garden has been the largest restaurant importer of Italian wine in the world — much of it Tuscan.

A company press release noted in 2000 that eating at the Olive Garden was "the next best thing to being there" [in Tuscany]. The restaurant chain observed that their menu had been revamped as Tuscan — inspired by their Chianti culinary institute. Their [tuscanity.olivegarden.com](http://tuscanity.olivegarden.com) website even helped clients properly pronounce Italian wines and pair them with food items on their menu. And yet it is clear that not all was accurate. *Chianti braised short ribs* were on the menu at Olive Garden — something that would be hard to find in Tuscany itself. Classic Tuscan dishes like *pappa*, *ribollita* and *lardo* were not.

There is no doubt that at the restaurant culinary stereotypes are in play. Customers are lead to believe that eating Italian-American food somehow brings them closer to Italy. The children's menu includes a pseudo Italian passport. Food is supplied in abundance. Personal salads are accompanied by tongs. The "never ending" pasta bowl, a well-advertised feature of Olive Garden's 'all-you-can-eat policy' is constituted from pasta and sauce purportedly cooked at a central depot and shipped to local franchises in a microwavable plastic bag. Cooking in bulk is operative here. This is important as eating in abundance is something that has long been celebrated as being Italian — despite the fact that most Italians did not have an abundance of food until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The advertised "authenticity" of Italian cuisine at Olive Garden is further emphasized





**Eating gnocchi at the Olive Garden**  
(Photo: Author)

through interior décor (photos of Dante and Italian *maiolica* fan out over the walls) as well as the touches of Italian flavor (freshly grated Romano cheese rains down on the food) and of course language — (there are *antipasti al forno* and potato *gnocchi* that one waitress claimed were ideal for kids).

One blog wonders if Olive Garden can be sued for false advertising — claiming that they are authentically Tuscan, when they are clearly not. Indeed, the Italian government has begun to explore how companies that have nothing to do with Tuscany can profit from its image. They have even begun to ponder issuing certificates of authenticity — particularly for restaurants. And maybe this concern was heard — as at some point the language of Olive Garden advertisements changed — the term “authentic” was replaced by “genuine”. Today one can have a genuine Italian meal, albeit not an authentic one, all staged within a structure meant to vaguely resemble a Tuscan farmhouse. At some point the [tuscany.olivegarden.com](http://tuscany.olivegarden.com) website was taken down. And since 2014 it has been hard to connect the Olive Garden with Chianti. So, has the Olive Garden moved on to being simply Italian?



In the summer of 2015 the Olive Garden sought to promote its version of Italian food by sending food trucks to cities throughout the United States. In Boston's North End the truck handed out free samples to promote their new breadstick sandwiches. The sandwiches, far from authentic, received mixed reviews.

The Olive Garden is owned by the same chain that owns *Red Lobster*, *Bahama Breeze*, and the *Longhorn steakhouse*. So, whether it is a Caribbean island hideaway, a western rancher's house, or Tuscany, the food chain, based down the road from Disney World, in Orlando, has successfully created some 2,100 branded gastro destinations in the US. They single-handedly construct the initial forays into Italian food consumption for most Americans.

And most recently other fast food chains have followed suit. You can now eat Tuscan chicken at Wendy's, a chain that even had an ad running on television that was in Italian and appears to have been shot on Lake Como, not in Tuscany. This underscores how Tuscany has come to stand in for all of Italy when it comes to food. The success of food products reaffirms this. Buitoni pasta (from Sansepolcro) and Bertolli olive oil (from Lucca) have thrived because they are widely consumed abroad. They are Italian, but also Tuscan.

We are all familiar with the extent to which Tuscany is a metonym for Italy in terms of language, art, and architecture. Now we see how that works with food — even IF many Italians might identify other regions as having better food, and even IF most Italian immigrants to the US, who brought their food customs with them, came from areas other than Tuscany.







Tourists  
walking  
in Florence  
(Photo:  
Cosimo  
Lipparini)

There is something majestic in the bad taste of Italy  
(E. M. Forster, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, 1905)

Today Italy is a popular American junior-year abroad destination. There are nearly 150 programs. Thirty-five of these are in Florence, 14 more in Tuscany. The location of the majority of the programs (Rome, Florence, Siena, Bologna, Venice) echoes the map of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Anglo-American tourism — the itineraries of program trips, even more so.

Since 1978 an organization known as AACUPI (the Association of American College and University Programs in Italy) has existed to coordinate information amongst programs. When AACUPI was founded there were only 23 programs in Italy. Smith College was the first, founded in 1931 in what is considered to be an American invention. The number of programs has since ballooned prompting the Italian Parliament to pass a law in 1999 recognizing them as non-profit entities. As study abroad programs have grown so too has the interest in pizza. A coincidence?

Italy is the second most popular study abroad destination after the UK with more than 30,000 students coming each year to participate in what AACUPI calls an “education in paradise”. The vast majority of students are white, and 75% are female. This collegiate grand tour is now defined by initiatives to encourage safe drinking and greater interaction with Italians. It is widely understood that the presence of students is an important component of the Italian economy. According to an AACUPI survey, one of the most popular activities of foreign students is shopping. Prada and Gucci are the preferred brands of consumption. Pucci is noticed.

Some Florentine programs are housed in villas once owned by members of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Anglo-American community. One of the best known is NYU located in the 15<sup>th</sup>-century villa La Pietra owned beginning in 1907 by the art dealer Arthur Acton (the primary agent for Stanford White’s Tuscan acquisitions), his wife Hortense, and subsequently his son Harold. As the latter noted in his 1970 book *Memoirs of an Aesthete*, the villa was furnished and included a garden purportedly designed by Cecil Pinsent.

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**A pizzaiuolo makes pizza in the San Lorenzo market, Florence**  
(Photo: Cosimo Lipparini)

## Pizza Fictions

Today there are over 250 pizzerias in Florence. There are many more storefronts that cater to those who want to eat on the go selling *pizza a taglio* — or by the slice. Pizza is the ultimate cheap food, particularly popular in tourist destinations.

If you want to eat an authentic Italian pizza, don't do so in Florence — even if the Basilico Pizza Academy offers basic and intensive pizza-making classes.

Pizza has a thin crust and is baked in a wood burning oven. Tuscan pizza is purportedly thinner than that found in Naples. The latter is considered authentic.

Only Neapolitan pizza bears the STG (*specialità tradizionale garantita*) qualification granted by the EU in 2006. How such traditional pizza is produced and consumed is now regulated by law. This is a seal of authenticity equivalent to the EU's DOP (*Denominazione d'Origine Protetta*) guarantee promoting the authentic and artisanal qualities of cheese, fruit and vegetables, meat, and olive oil.

Neapolitan pizza, which dates to the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, is considered to be the food of the poor, what Carlo Collodi referred to as “greasy filth”. Pizza in Naples was inexpensive and purchased by citizens who lived in small, dark, densely packed apartments without kitchens. There were already 68 pizzerias in Naples registered by the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Even more was sold by street hawkers who could not afford a storefront. Pizza, like *lampredotto*, was the ultimate cheap street food. Both the squalid urban conditions and diet of cheap food was blamed for the repeated cholera epidemics that swept through cities like Naples, killing thousands. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century pizza became a global phenomenon extending from Chile to Hong Kong.

**opposite**  
**Chinese**  
**protestors in**  
**Prato, 2013**  
(Photo: FlavioCDC  
Flickr)





### Made in Italy by Chinese

In 2009 an Italian law was passed designating products designed and manufactured in their totality within Italy as MADE IN ITALY. It was recognized that there was prestige to the Italian label. Although the MADE IN ITALY designation had been used since 1980 to brand Italian uniqueness in fashion, food, furniture and cars it was common for items to not be completely made in Italy. Materials were sometimes manufactured outside of Italy and then pieced and sewn within Italy and labeled as Italian. So while the MADE IN ITALY label was not new, it has a new meaning.

Since the 1990s the Chinese community in Prato has figured out a way to profit from the MADE IN ITALY label. Chinese textile workers in this Tuscan town now constitute one of the largest concentrations of Chinese in all of Europe. More than 3,000 businesses are owned by Chinese. More than 35,000 Chinese work around the clock producing *pronto moda* or fast fashion inexpensively while maintaining the Italian cachet and pride of being MADE IN ITALY. Many of the Chinese workers work 17-hour shifts and sleep in the factory. All of this became clear when the Teresa Moda garment factory, located at the edge of Prato burned in December 2013. There were no fire alarms, fire extinguishers, sprinklers or emergency lights in the factory. Seven workers died. A lawyer for some of the victims noted that all Italians who allow laws to be violated are complicit in the deaths.

By some accounts more than \$1.5 million is channeled to China each day — profits from the Italian textile trade. Supermarkets, schools, and restaurants show the Chinese influence by adapting foodstuffs and language to suit. Peanut oil has replaced olive oil at home and at local restaurants.





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**Laboratorio  
Gucci, 1950-59**  
(Photo: Foto  
Locchi GG\_35)

*opposite*  
**Outfit from the  
collection of  
Emilio Pucci**  
(Photo:  
TopFoto/ Alinari  
TOP-F-964458-  
0000)

## Gucci

Gucci is one of the desired MADE IN ITALY brands. Founded in 1921 by Guccio Gucci, who once worked at the Savoy hotel in London and later at the Savoy on the Via Tornabuoni in Florence — a hotel that catered to the English.

The leather goods company known for its travel bags — was the first company to produce a line of luggage. The firm experimented with a range of materials (such as canvas and bamboo in the 1930s. By the 1980s the brand was over-extended, trading in on its history to produce more than 22,000 products ranging from belts to scotch. Under the direction of creative director Tom Ford, in the 1990s Gucci reclaimed its prestige.

Now, more than 90 years old, Gucci has since evolved into a globally recognized brand owned by a French company. While Gucci cultivates the

glamour of craft long associated with Florentine design (Gucci publicity claims this is a brand that is synonymous with craftsmanship and heritage, “Craftsmanship is imprinted in Gucci’s DNA”), they also exploit notions of aristocracy. Their signature saddle bags and key fobs reminiscent of horse bridles recall the Gucci beginnings as a saddlery shop as well as a lifestyle that is unattainable by most despite the air of privilege put forth by some.

A Gucci museum, founded in 2010 and opened in the 14<sup>th</sup>-century Palazzo della Mercanzia on the Piazza Signoria, underscores that there is something inherently Italian, specifically Tuscan, about the artisanal leather work and apparel design of the company. Gucci structures a parallel between their brand and the Palazzo — further pretending to be something they are not. Even though some Gucci products may incorporate elements made on assembly lines in Italy by Chinese or even in China itself (something the company denies despite the presence of *Made In China*, labels according to one blog) they maintain an appearance of being hand crafted. Indeed, some luxury brand executives go so far as to say that luxury goods can only be made in Europe — a statement that is inherently racist. To reinforce the artisanal roots of the brand, Gucci now sponsors art exhibitions and restoration projects — recently tapestries.



## Pucci

Emilio Pucci designed clothing in psychedelic colors and patterns that clung to the body allowing people to move about freely without girdles or corsets. His slim stirrup pants were the first of their kind.

In 1958 Pucci purchased the Antico Setificio Fiorentino to ensure the quality of the production of silk fabric.

Italy was simply not always the fashion capital as we know it today. During the 1930s and 1940s Italian fashion was largely provincial. Italy was still subordinate to Paris when it came to style. But



once ready-to-wear fashion became a mainstay, Italian fashion took off. The first fashion show in Florence was held in 1951 at the villa Torrigiani. Emilio Pucci was one of the featured fashion designers. Despite his noteworthy Florentine debut (commented on by the five journalists present at the show) fashion designers like Pucci still had to make a name for themselves abroad before they could be successfully marketed as Italian.

And so, Pucci did work abroad — designing clothes ranging from ski outfits in stretch fabric to uniforms. The stewardess outfits designed by Pucci for the Texas-based Braniff Airways between 1965 and 1976 capture the period in technicolor splendor. The stewardesses worked on the new “jellybean” fleet painted in 15 different hues including lavender. One of the six collections Pucci designed for the now defunct airline include a wardrobe called the “airstrip”. Braniff’s television commercial showed a stewardess simulating a striptease as she peeled off layers of clothing as the flight progressed to reveal different outfits. Even Mattel made a Pucci styled Barbie stewardess.



Foreign tourists  
admire Pietro  
Tacca's bronze  
cinghiale,  
Florence  
(Photo: Cosimo  
Lipparini)



Foreign tourists  
gather in the  
Piazza Signoria,  
Florence  
(Photo: Cosimo  
Lipparini)



*opposite*  
Tourists gather  
in front of the  
Duomo, Florence  
(Photo: Cosimo  
Lipparini)

Tourists taking  
a selfie in front  
of the Duomo,  
Florence  
(Photo: Cosimo  
Lipparini)

Georgetown University is based in the Villa le Balze, nestled in the hillside of Fiesole. The villa was designed in 1911 by the English duo of Geoffrey Scott and Cecil Pinsent as an ex novo Renaissance home for Charles Augustus Strong, an American philosopher. The villa's lack of Renaissance pedigree is emblazoned in the vacant coat-of-arms above the entrance, the only clue to the villa's early 20<sup>th</sup>-century past. Scott and Pinsent were





responsible for the redesign of over 20 villas and gardens in the hills between Florence and Fiesole. Separately they designed even more beginning with Berenson's I Tatti which Mark Twain claimed "was perfect".

The imagining of the pristine Tuscan agrarian landscape is fed and in turn feeds a virtual industry of agro-porn, images that are intended to arouse a sense of romantic longing for the ru-





**Drunken junior-year abroad students gather in the Piazza Santo Spirito**  
(Photo: Cosimo Lipparini)

**opposite**  
**The cypress-lined winding farm road designed by Cecil Pinsent on land formerly a part of the Villa La Foce estate**  
(Photo: Fototeca ENIT)

ral that is addictive, and as we have seen, censored. The imaginings of Tuscany are literary and visual, devoted to capturing the rolling hills, winding cypress lined roads, fields of poppies and sunflowers, olive groves, vineyards, and farm houses. One of the most often photographed in Tuscany is none other than the cypress-lined dirt lane curving its way through land that was once a part of Iris and Antonio Origo's La Foce estate.

This road, along with a portion of the Villa Foce estate, was landscaped between 1927 and 1939 by the British architect Cecil Pinsent as a part of his redesign of the Origo gardens and portions of the surrounding farmland. Pinsent had already done work at Bernard Berenson's Villa I Tatti in Fiesole. The picturesque road led to several of the Origo farms that were designed by Pinsent. The winding road lined by cypress trees has become an iconic image of the idealized romantic vision of the Tuscan landscape, it is the result of fabrication. This image of the *bel paesaggio* was designed to recall scenes from trecento Sienese painting — specifically Ambrogio Lorenzetti's fresco of Good Government located in Siena's town hall<sup>1</sup>. The countryside was orderly, productive, and well

<sup>1</sup> The villa's garden and the serpentine road lined by a row of cypress that "recalled quattrocento painting", was planted between 1927 and 1939. On the villa see Benedetta Origo, Momi Livingston, Laurie Olin, and John Dixon Hunt, *La Foce: A Garden and Landscape in Tuscany* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); On Pinsent see Galletti, "Cecil Pinsent, architetto dell'umanesimo", *Il giardino europeo del Novecento 1900-1940: Atti del III Colloquio Internazionale, Pietrasanta 27-28 settembre 1991*, edited by Alessandro Tagliolini, (Florence: Edifir, 1993), p. 92.





maintained. Farmsteads were surrounded by toiling peasants. Everything appeared to be bucolic. The extent to which people come to terms with, transform and protect, their geography is evidenced.

The World Heritage Committee concluded that the Val d'Orcia, which includes the Villa Focce estate as well as the neighboring communes of Castiglion d'Orcia, Montalcino, Pienza, Radicofani and San Quirico d'Orcia, met the selection criteria for inclusion in UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites, precisely because it exemplified "the beauty of well-managed Renaissance agricultural landscapes"<sup>2</sup>. In other words, the landscape reshaped by Pinsent in the 1920s and 1930s, based on 14<sup>th</sup>-century painting, came to be seen by 2004 as "an exceptional reflection of the way the landscape was re-written in Renaissance times to reflect the ideals of good governance and to create an aesthetically pleasing pictures [sic]". The landscape was, as UNESCO noted, "an icon".

The irony here is obvious. A landscape, reworked based upon a 14<sup>th</sup>-century painted, (and there is no reason to believe accurate), depiction of the Tuscan countryside, has come to be identified and protected as the physical reality of the painting. Even the system of sharecropping was idealized by the World Heritage nomination. The harsh realities of Tuscan *mezza-*

<sup>2</sup> World Heritage Scanned Nomination, 1026rev, Val d'Orcia, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2004, p. 132, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1026> accessed March 2, 2010.





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Calendar depicting a Tuscan farmhouse, photo by Filippo Galluzzi, calendar produced by Editrice Giusti di S. Becocci, Florence, 2010

opposite Postcard of Tuscany featuring a farmhouse, published by Edizioni M.T.S., Cartoline, Calendari e Souvenirs, Florence, c. 2008

dria was described as a “landscape...created to be efficient, functional, equitable and aesthetically pleasing”. Presumably the impoverished farm families who fled that land might have disagreed. Suffice to say, the UNESCO preservation of the Tuscan viewshed is a classic case of protecting the land as it is viewed rather than worked. The landscape became a national commodity that could be sold abroad<sup>3</sup>.

It is clear that Tuscany’s agrarian landscape is a cultural construction. Not surprisingly, the image of Tuscany produced and readily consumed has been carefully edited. This image of pastoral harmony (to borrow from

Denis Cosgrove’s discussion of the English landscape) is an image that is sustained by both locals and foreigners who profit from, and seek refuge in its existence. Among other things, this landscape is indebted to the well-established genre of self-discovery literature that chronicles farmhouse restorations — from Frances Mayes’ familiar *Under the Tuscan Sun* to Elizabeth Minchilli’s volume on restoring a farmhouse. The idea of a procurable farmhouse or villa has provided fodder for books, including house biographies that make the most of the agro-porn industry. There are also tourist companies that specialize in walking, biking, and hiking tours of the region. Guidebooks provide information for the more intrepid explorers. Newsletters are devoted to commentary on its form. Calendars and postcards perpetuate its sunny disposition.

There is an obsession with Tuscany on the part of foreigners and Italians alike that is reinforced by the extreme popularity of popular culture such as Andrea Bocelli’s 2001 best selling music record *Cieli Toscani* (*Tuscan Skies*). Bocelli, who grew up on a family farm south of Pisa, returned to his native landscape to film a series of music videos for *Cieli Toscani* that paid homage to the rural landscape that, in his own words, provided the foundation for his romantic music. Beppe Severgnini has noted that there is a tendency to dispense with one’s critical apparatus when visiting Tuscany. Even the outspoken Marxist feminist Germaine Greer seemed naively besotted when she described her vacation Tus-

<sup>3</sup> Denis Cosgrove says this best when writing about the English countryside, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998 edition) p. 269.





can farmhouse surrounded by a garden, oak trees and bathed in sunlight, a house that “sits on the side of a great basin of luminous air”<sup>4</sup>. How is this possible?

The image of Tuscany constitutes a highly selective romanticization of the scenic. The viewer has to remind herself that there is in fact nothing easy, particularly peaceful, or inherently romantic, about the agrarian land of Tuscany. Life on the land was and still is, hard work. Tremendous effort is involved to maintain an olive grove, harvest enough saffron from a field of crocuses, or oil from sunflowers.

We must ask ourselves what has been carefully edited from these scenes? What parts of Tuscany are not included in such imagery?

Statistically Tuscany is one of today’s most industrial regions in Italy<sup>5</sup>. This is nothing new. Since the Middle Ages the region has been highly industrial — with businesses ranging from textile production to banking. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the region was known for the quality of its Carrara marble, ceramics, paper products and pharmaceuticals. And yet, the industrial face of the region is not the one that is presented to and consumed by the average tour-

<sup>4</sup> *Daddy We Hardly Knew You*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> The province of Florence is the most industrial within central Italy. It figures eighth in terms of productivity on a national level. See <http://www.investintuscany.com/165-firenze.html>, accessed April 7, 2011.



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## Is Prostitution the New Sharecropping?

According to statistics compiled by Doxyspotting.com, Italy has more street prostitutes or *lucciole* (fireflies) than any other country — as many as 70,000. Prostitution has been legal since 1958 although many prostitutes wear brightly colored clothing so that they can be easily identified — a kind of de facto sumptuary legislation similar to the popular red skirts worn by Renaissance prostitutes. Typically the contemporary prostitutes are foreign women (many are young minors) who spend time waiting on chairs by the side of the road for the next client whom they service in a car or on a mattress hidden in the brush. Conditions are squalid. Customers are primarily Italian.

Many of the women are Nigerian. Some are from Eastern Europe. All are seen as Other. Abuses are rampant. Workers have no benefits, are typically illegal and have little say over how or where they work. They keep little or none of the profits. They are subjected to disease and danger. Some have even been murdered as is evidenced by a Romanian prostitute who was crucified on a highway overpass in Florence in 2014. Corrupt officials and police are often involved.

As many as 1 million African women become prostitutes in Western Europe each year. A large percentage end up in Tuscany. The crisis is so severe that the United Nations has created a Crime and Justice Institute to take action. Benin City, which was once a prominent exporter of slaves to the New World, has again emerged as a major player in the slave trade — this time in trafficked women sent to Italy for the sex trade.

Since the 1980s Nigeria has obtained a leading role in the so-called skin trade, equal to exports of oil to the entire Western world. Eighty percent of the Nigerian women trafficked to Italy for the sex trade come from this region. The Nigerian women who arrive in Italy typically have \$30,000-\$60,000 in debt for their transportation and housing. The women charge as little as 20 euros for what is called short-time full service.

The network that lures Nigerian women into prostitution is well established. As a Migration Policy Institute report outlined in 2005, the erratic policing of trafficking in Nigeria, combined with rampant violence and widespread emigration aspirations, has meant that thousands of women leave Nigeria for Italy — typically with the blessing of family, community and the Pentecostal church, of which many are members. According to some statistics, one in three young Nigerian women have received offers to go to Europe. Although many Nigerians seek legal asylum in Europe, few receive it. Thus young women are enticed with good job prospects and subsequently coerced into prostitution. Severe poverty at home, draws women to the trade. A madam in Nigeria, male “trolleys” who escort the women into Italy, and an Italian-based Nigerian madam all facilitate the process.

opposite  
A Nigerian sex  
worker in Italy  
(Photo:  
globalinitiative.  
net)





In 2002 BBC's Channel Four ran a documentary on contemporary Tuscany which featured the plight of Nigerian sex workers. A year later a Tuscan Bed and Breakfast owner lamented that prostitution had become a cottage industry marring the backroad beauty of the region. The website for the Perugia tourist office even warns visitors to expect prostitutes to be a part of the scenery. Typically dropped off in the morning by their Italian madam, the prostitutes stranded on rural roads are a familiar site. At least ten Nigerian women sell sex along the road from Florence to Greve in Chianti. Even Dario Castagno, the Tuscan tour guide and author of *Too Much Tuscan Sun*, has admitted to frequenting Nigerian prostitutes on the road from Siena to Grosseto. Some have suggested that there are more prostitutes in Italy than Catholic priests. Indeed, prostitutes are so familiar in Italy that Nigerians who are not prostitutes have little desire to travel to Italy for fear, as one Nigerian blog contends, of being misidentified as selling sex.

Florence has had a large population of prostitutes since the Renaissance when Eastern European women were imported as "domestic workers". The famed Merchant of Prato and many Medici made sure that they were supplied. Today trip advisor gives a high rating to a walking tour for adults only called Sex, Drugs & Renaissance. The city's recent incarnation as a sex hot spot is intriguing. Le Cascine park is now a hotbed for gay and transsexual prostitution. Stops along the autostrada are popular hook up spots day and night.

Even those not seeking out prostitutes Florence has been identified as one of the "Best Baby Making Vacation Destinations for Every Couple". Indeed, the popular press was keen to point out that Kim Kardashian and Kanye West conceived their daughter North there. Despite this, an Australian couple, recently caught having sex on a bench, prompted a politician to beg for better quality tourists. And yet in 2013, 14 politicians were investigated for Berlusconi-style Bunga-Bunga escapades involving 142 prostitutes.

We must ask if those virile naked white men (David and Neptune) in the Piazza Signoria in Florence constitute the counter narrative to the subjugation of women.





**Film still from  
Carrara, Marble  
Quarries**  
(Photo: You Tube)

ist. Indeed, an image of industry would appear to be in direct conflict with a peaceful rural landscape. If this were not the case then we might see postcards featuring the Piaggio vespa and motorcycle factories exuding industrial waste into the Arno river valley at Pontedera. We might be familiar with images of the industrial hub of Poggibonsi sited in the shadow of San Gimignano, famous for the sturdy cement mixers produced by the Imer Group. We might collect calendars featuring the Ansalsobreda company in Pistoia — renown for its production of mass transit vehicles distributed throughout the world. We would presumably also be familiar with the images of the productive industrial quarries of Carrara, north of Pisa and maybe even the international leading Italian pharmaceutical company Menarini founded in Florence. But this is not the landscape pictured on the scenic postcards and calendars, or even in advertisements such as the one for Barilla pasta, which features the landscape that purportedly produces the food and celebrates Aldo, the Sieneese sharecropper, as well.

Oddly, the only industries celebrated in the popular press are wine making and olive oil production — which are questionably Tuscan — dominated by foreign multi-national corporations and diluted with non-Tuscan products.

It is ironic that the fascination with this landscape, while rooted in an idea of agricultural productivity, has in fact undermined the reality of that very agricultural productivity. Those seeking to tour, vacation, and even live in this landscape have simultaneously





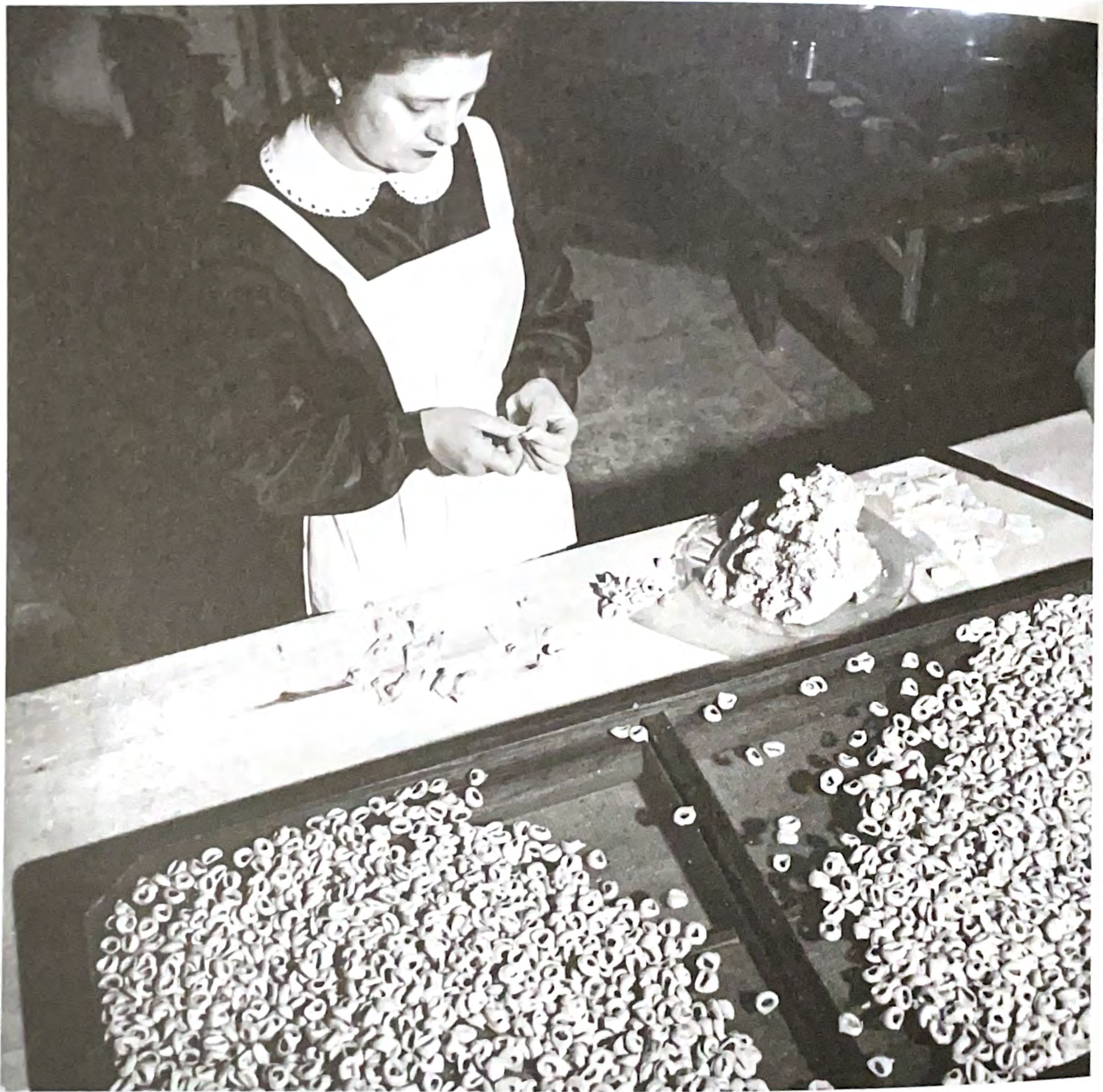
**Advertisement for a Piaggio scooter** (Photo: [http://www.piaggio.com/mediaObject/piaggio/campaign/showcase\\_ambiente/resolutions/res-n1000x400-p1335078790/showcase\\_ambiente.jpg](http://www.piaggio.com/mediaObject/piaggio/campaign/showcase_ambiente/resolutions/res-n1000x400-p1335078790/showcase_ambiente.jpg))

**A subway car manufactured by the AnsaldoBreda company based in Pistoia as seen in the main piazza in Pistoia, montage** (Photo: [www.ansaldobreda.com](http://www.ansaldobreda.com))

helped to destroy agricultural production. Former farms have become air-conditioned inns with swimming pools. Former farmers have become hoteliers and rustic cooks. And the fever is spreading. Outside the town of San Gimignano (population 1,400), there are 100 agritourist destinations with over 1500 rooms<sup>6</sup>. Each of these is the beneficiary of advantageous tax structure that privileges agritourism development over that of the traditional hotel. This underscores the extent to which the government supports the maintenance of the agricultural identity of Tuscany. Within the popular imagination, the touristic rediscovery of other re-

<sup>6</sup> These are the agritourism sites located in the comune of San Gimignano (population 7,700). Personal correspondence with the Pro Loco di San Gimignano, April 4, 2011.





Woman making tortellini, c. 1955 (Photo: Alinari VBA-S-007840-0004)

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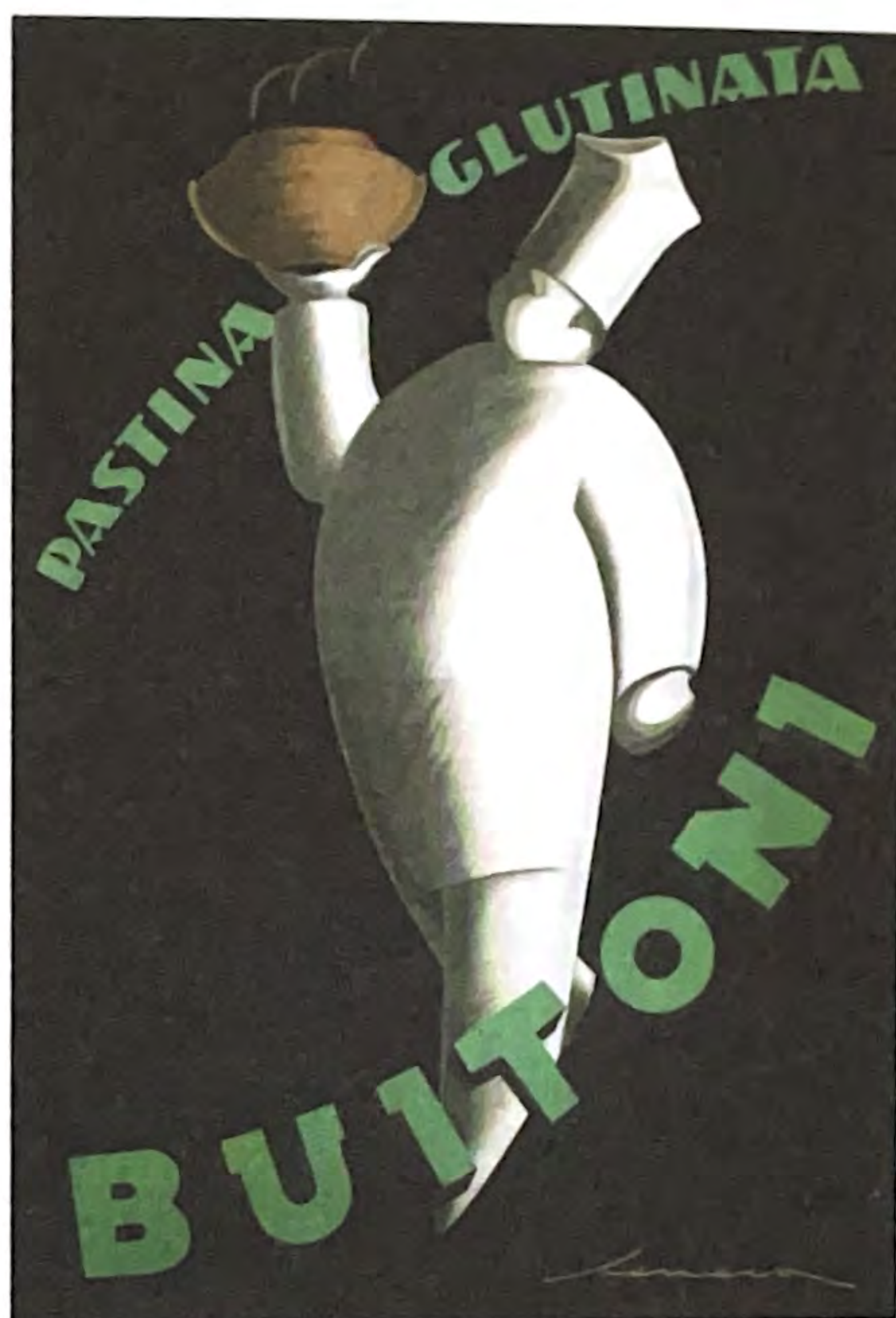
opposite  
Federico Seneca,  
poster for  
Buitoni pasta  
glutinata, 1928  
(Photo: Alamy)

## Pasta

In the United States, it is clear that Italian cuisine has come to assume a place of dominance. The Tuscan pasta company Buitoni (founded in 1827), with its test kitchen located in Sansepolcro, was sold to Nestlé in 1988. It has become a household staple. Bertoli, based in Lucca, introduced “rustic cut pasta sauce” in 2017, which according to their ad was a way to “bring Tuscany to your table”. The Parma based company Barilla has now emerged as a successful multi-national company with pasta-producing plants in



Ames, Iowa and Avon, New York. Barilla is now the number one brand of pasta in the United States. Heavily promoted and widely consumed, the company remains dependent on cultivating the association between food and the Italian (specifically Tuscan) landscape. In an advertisement the Barilla company cultivates the appearance of a handwritten testimonial recorded in a hand-bound book. A photograph of Aldo, a contemporary Sienese sharecropper, accompanies the text which notes that some people come to love the Tuscan food so much, they never leave. In this, the celebration of the Tuscan landscape and good food go hand in hand. This image is augmented by a 2013 proclamation by Guido Barilla on an Italian radio pro-



gram that Barilla is a (heteronormative) family-friendly company that believes the woman plays a fundamental role. Food, family, and the rural coalesce into one. The interview went viral amongst those who felt that this bucolic image of Italy did not have everyone's best interests in mind. Widely publicized boycotts of the pasta followed — most famously by Chirlane McCray, the wife of New York City mayor Bill di Blasio.

Mainstream culture thrives on reinforcing the romanticized notion that good Italian food and the landscape go hand in hand. The Buitoni website notes that the test kitchen is “nestled in the hills of Tuscany, among verdant fields of wheat, tomatoes, vegetables, olives and herbs” as if the company's rural location somehow legitimizes its food.





**The Luci house, Greve in Chianti** (Photo: Author)

## R

### **Greve in Chianti – a Town in the Heart of Tuscany**

Over the course of doing research for this book I stayed with friends in a post-modern sort of Tuscan farmhouse. Built in the 1980s by a man who restored farmhouses — the house was constructed of materials and fragments salvaged from derelict farm buildings — it bore an aura of authenticity while lacking historical accuracy. Similar to houses in the region it boasted an outdoor staircase leading to a second-story covered terrace. Old wooden beams were visible in the terrace.

The ground floor has a large entrance that is deceptively utilitarian in appearance — leading to a thoroughly modern kitchen rather than the animal stalls that one would typically expect of this kind of structure. The exterior of the building built of stone, is stuccoed in a version of the Tuscan red, and crowned in terra cotta roof tiles salvaged from nearby farms. The property is surrounded by mature trees and vineyards belonging to a neighboring winery. All of this renders the complex disconcertingly familiar.

The house, located in the Chianti region south of Florence, was originally built with



the hopes of providing a home for several separate adult children and their respective families. So while it had the appearance of a rambling single-family house, it is in fact comprised of four separate quarters under one farmhouse roof. My friends purchased the property — complete with a small orchard, extensive vegetable gardens and free ranging chickens — from the man who had built the home. They in turn brought four generations to live in the complex. Family members ranging in age from one to 100 frequently gathered in the ample kitchen — enjoying multi-course dinners while sharing stories. They unwittingly seemed to fulfill Leonbattista Alberti's dream *della famiglia*. Alberti was of course the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Florentine architect and author of influential theoretical texts on architecture, family life, painting, and sports.

To reach this house, I had to traverse a steep and winding road. As I ascended this Tuscan hill I would take in the view of the surrounding landscape. The neighboring village of Montefioralle, birthplace of Amerigo Vespucci and now home to a large number of German expatriates living in their meticulously restored homes, seemed to hover precariously above my friends' house.

Nearby was the Villa Vignamaggio, where Leonardo purportedly painted the *Mona Lisa*, and which provided the setting for convivial companionship, romantic interludes and fine dining in Kenneth Branagh's 1993 film *Much Ado About Nothing*. If my position was just right, I could catch a glimpse of the irregular piazza in the neighboring town of Greve in Chianti where the explorer Giovanni di Verrazano maintains permanent surveillance in the form of a commemorative statue — a reminder that some people actually once did voluntarily leave this picturesque landscape for new worlds.

From my friends' house I could make out other farms — some of which are still active, many of which are not. Most have been transformed into comfortable homes — modernized retreats from big city smog. As the Chianti tour guide Dario Castagno has chronicled in his narrative of experiences with tourists seeking the Tuscan sublime entitled *Too Much Tuscan Sun*, such farmhouses were often abandoned by resident farmers who fled to neighboring villages in search of a more modern way of life. Farm life was far from easy. Houses typically lacked electricity, running water, and indoor sanitation facilities. At best the farms were uncomfortable. At worst they were uninhabitable. Furthermore, many of the farmers occupied a position of virtual servitude, barely making ends meet.





**Advertisement for a wedding in San Gimignano**

(Photo: [www.weddingsitaly.com/wedding-in-tuscany/wedding-in-san-gimignano.html](http://www.weddingsitaly.com/wedding-in-tuscany/wedding-in-san-gimignano.html))

## R

### **Celebrity Weddings in Rural Tuscany**

Kim + Kanye, David Bowie + Iman, Charles + Diana. Tuscany has long been associated with weddings and honeymoons. The reality television star Kim Kardashian and singer/songwriter Kanye West got married at the Forte di Belvedere. The musician David Bowie and the super model Iman had their reception at a 16<sup>th</sup>-century villa. The Prince and Princess of Wales honeymooned at Acton's Villa la Pietra. Romance abounds. Since the young English Lucy Honeychurch fell for George in E.M. Forster's novel *A Room with a View* popular imagination has inter-related love, a view, and Tuscany. According to the blog *Girl in Florence*, the premier proposal destination in Florence is the panoramic view from San Miniato al Monte.

There are several companies that specialize in organizing weddings. With names like *Bellissimo* and *Regency* they emphasize the sumptuous nature of such events that harken back to the wedding of Maria de Medici.

These companies promote getting married in villas surrounded by vineyards or cypress trees with spectacular views of the Tuscan countryside, in Tuscan gardens or little village churches, or the medieval town of San Gimignano. The wedding planners offer to arrange "country chic weddings". Even Sting and his wife Trudie Styler have succumbed. They purchased the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Villa il Palagio and its 900-acre estate in 1997, 15 kilometers from Greve in Chianti. They spent more than six years restoring it and now rent it for country style weddings accommodating upwards of 500 people. According to publicity, their estate provides the ultimate "rural-chic" venue. They unwittingly hired a firm linked to the Camorra mafia to restore structures on the property.

*opposite*  
**Barilla pasta advertisement celebrating the Tuscan sharecropping system**  
(Photo: collection of the Author)



gions is often defined by whether or not they can become the next Tuscany. As the *New York Times* proclaimed in a headline feature, "Is Le Marche the Next Tuscany? Maybe"<sup>7</sup>.

This book has been an attempt to reconstruct the fascination with Tuscany, including the architecture sited in that landscape, dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the Fascist era to today, and in the process clarify aspects that have been hidden. It is necessary to understand how an interest in the rural, as cultivated outside of Tuscany, helped underscore that for those within. While this study does not purport to provide a definitive discussion of this land, it does seek to reconstruct elements that made this cultural landscape viable, if not highly palatable, first to foreigners, then to Italians during

times of tremendous austerity and racial hatred, and then to foreign consumers once again. Tuscany has long been defined by outsiders—whether the 19<sup>th</sup>-century scholar or the Junior Year student. The Fascist period — an era of exaggerated vitriol, imperial expansion, and intense mass mediation through tourism, photography, film, and magazines — was an attempt to reclaim this definition or narrative from foreign domination. Italy's imperial endeavors in East Africa during the 1930s are important in so much as they precipitated an appeal to a native Italian culture. That native culture was felt by the PNF to be rooted in Tuscan culture (sites, historical figures such as Dante and Michelangelo, fictional characters such as Pinocchio) and has remained central to the consumed narrative.

Rural Tuscany has always been colonized by non-rural constituents such as Nathaniel Hawthorne and Frances Mayes. And it has been integral to nation building. This became particularly apparent during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and again during the *ventennio* of Fascist rule when the push towards consuming an exclusively native culture was rooted in the rural. While *I Macchiaoli*, a group of Italian artists painting in Tuscany in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, might have been the first to proactively image the rural land and its peasant occupants, the Tuscan countryside has been the object of ongoing fascination from Italian



<sup>7</sup> Christopher Solomon, "Is Le Marche the Next Tuscany? Maybe. Seeking (and Finding) the Vera Italia Between the Adriatic and the Apennines", the *New York Times*, May 22, 2005, pp. 1, 10-11.



unification to the present. Whether it has been termed honest, native, simple, sublime, efficient, or pure, the rural is conveniently re-conceptualized so as to exclude the dirty and difficult. In addition, foreign aspects are suppressed. Whether it's the *extra-communitari* who harvest grapes or the olive oil that is not really Tuscan, foreign presence continues to be carefully excised so as to underscore the region's native character.

Italians' behaviors and bodies have been continually remade. Choices, including what food to eat, what clothes to wear and what words to use, reflected a kind of native modernity. It has been noted that since the Risorgimento, the consumption of foreign culture was seen as a weakness. As Italy became increasingly racist and self sufficient during the regime, government officials became hostile to foreign culture and sought to curb the dangers of globalization.

It has been argued that the promotion of the native and hence rural is a rejection of the modern. But this is too simplistic. By the time of Mussolini the government undertook to remake Italians while underscoring that rural culture was modern. The rural was honest, simultaneously anti-foreign and anti-bourgeois. It was most definitely modern.

Knowing that today's image of the Tuscan landscape is indebted to the racist propaganda that promoted it should complicate any notion of this being unadulterated terrain. Interest in the Tuscan *campo* has deep roots — ones that are not as honest and simple as many imagine. It is a constructed landscape.



Hunger is the best cook  
(Carlo Collodi, *Pinocchio*, 1883)

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Perhaps more telling than the activities of members of the Gruppo Toscano is the extent to which interest in country life, as particularly situated in Tuscany, has survived to this day.

More than 80 years after Berardi and Baroni launched their photographic project, and more than 150 years after the astute comments of Hawthorne, the image of the Tuscan countryside remains integral to the contemporary understanding of the Italian landscape. The rural house is commonly featured in postcards and calendars, best-selling books, television advertisements, novels, and movies. It would seem that the goals of Pagano and Daniel to infuse the canon of architecture with a healthy dose of the rural succeeded. Today, they themselves might be surprised at the extent to which rural architecture has come to symbolize an essential character of Tuscany and, by extension, Italy.

Interest in the countryside, as associated with the roots of the modern nation state, have survived. The desire to celebrate supposedly simple country life is no longer seen as the preferred venue for celebrating the efficiency, virility, and productivity of a self-sufficient modern nation. On the contrary, the Tuscan countryside has come to represent a nostalgic throwback to a simpler time and era, an opportunity to retreat from the banality of an increasingly frenetic and globalized society. The countryside is now the destination for a decidedly anti-modern celebration. The Chianti tour guide Dario Castagno has noted in his amusing book *Too Much Tuscan Sun* that his foreign clients come to Tuscany seeking the simple pleasures of the countryside — renting restored farmhouses, feasting on local food and wine, and taking in the panoramic view from the Castello Brolio. The enthusiasm of these tourists and expatriates has, as much as anything, contributed to the preservation of Tuscany as a place of natural and cultural beauty.

In John Mortimer's *Summer's Lease*, a mystery set amongst a community of British ex-pats who occupied villas throughout Chianti (what he refers to as Chiantishire), foreigners escaped to Tuscany to relieve themselves of the fast-paced London life and seek sensual grati-





## What happens to the Gruppo Toscano after the Station?

Several of the architects who used photography during the 1930s to excite an interest in vernacular architecture went on to have successful careers in which the vernacular played an important role. Pier Niccolò Berardi (1904-1989) became well known for ex-novo country villas, which drew inspiration from Tuscan farmhouses<sup>1</sup>. Nello Baroni (1906-1958) designed the now closed Cine-Teatro Rex (subsequently renamed the Cinema Apollo) in Florence in 1936 for which he was praised for his use of utilitarian materials such as *graniglia* (colored cement mixed with pieces of marble), lacquered fir, and artificial stone. Gruppo Toscano member Italo Gamberini (1907-1990) had a prolific career in Tuscany designing villas, theaters, banks, apartment and office buildings. With Baroni he designed the new Ponte della Vittoria to

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**Nello Baroni,  
Cinema Rex,  
Florence**

(Photo: Alinari  
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00000)

cross the Arno after the war. In the early 1970s he designed the concrete Archivio di Stato. Later in the decade he created the Hotel Brunelleschi which enveloped a medieval tower and incorporated Florence's Roman ruins.

Giovanni Michellucci (1891-1990), the most celebrated member of the Gruppo Toscano, had a lengthy career in his native Tuscany. He designed a number of churches that draw heavily upon the use of vernacular materials — *pietra forte*, concrete, copper, marble, glass and bronze. This is evidenced at structures of varying scales. It is certainly the case at the intimate church at Lagoni di Sasso Pisano (1956-8) located in the town of Castelnuovo di Val di Cecina southwest of Siena in the province of Pisa. The building created a religious and civic meeting center in a small rural community. Michelucci also designed the more imposing church of Saint John the Baptist, commonly known as the Church of the Autostrada in 1960-1964. Sited between two major Florentine highways — the Autostrada del Sole connecting Milan with Naples and the Fascist era Firenze-Mare highway connecting Florence with Pisa. The church was ostensibly built to

<sup>1</sup> John Dickie, *Delizia! The Epic History of the Italians and Their Food* (New York: Free Press, 2007), p. 188.





**Giovanni Michelucci, church of the Villaggio della Fabbrica di Sasso Pisano, 1957-58**  
 (Photo: <http://karl-grazieallavita.blogspot.com/2015/02/la-chiesina-del-villaggio-della.html>)

**Giovanni Michelucci, Church of San Giovanni Battista, outside of Florence, 1960-1964** (Photo: Author)

honor the workers killed while fulfilling the Fascist era dream of creating transportation infrastructure. Both buildings embodied the sense of economy, functionality, and structure underscored as guiding principals of modern architecture by Pagano and Daniel in the 1936 Triennale. In keeping with his ideas he established the Fondazione Michelucci in 1982 to research the relationship between society and space in contemporary architecture.





## Tuscan Wine

Beginning in late October 1828 James Fenimore Cooper spent 9 months in Florence, first at the Hotel New York and then in a rented apartment in the Palazzo Ricasoli on the via Ricasoli. There he claimed that the wine from the Ricasoli vineyards was “among the best of Tuscany” and drank it “with great satisfaction”. The wine he drank was a kind of Chianti (which dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and was once white) and did not assume its present form until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century when Bettino Ricasoli introduced the modern Chianti recipe which required the use of at least 80% Sangiovese grapes. This blend received the government’s *Denominazione di origine controllata* (DOC) regulation in 1967. The *Denominazione di origine controllata e garantita* (DOCG) label in turn was subsequently intro-

duced by the government to be even more restrictive. Wines with a DOCG designation are analyzed by licensed personnel before being bottled, sealed and numbered. Chianti can be termed *classico* (as it is produced following traditional methods), *riserva* (because it has been aged for at least seven months), or *superiore* (defined since 1996 and produced according to even more restrictive protocols).

The Chianti region, extending from Pisa in the west, to the hills above Florence, to Arezzo in the east and Siena in the south, produces more DOC and DOCG wine than any other region in Italy. The Chianti Classico producing region in turn is centered around the Tuscan villages of Gaiole, Castellina and Radda. By 1932 these towns had appended Chianti to their names. Greve (the original location of the *cittàslow* movement) followed suit in 1972. Only wine produced in this area, by vineyards that are a part of the Chianti Classico Consortium (introduced to prevent wine fraud) can bear the insignia of the black rooster.

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Federico Seneca, poster advertising the Mostra mercato dei vini tipici d'Italia, 1935 (Photo: Fondazione Massimo and Sonia Cirulli Archive, San Lazzaro di Savena, Bologna)



Technically, Brunello di Montalcino, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano and wine from the Antinori vineyards in Rufina are kinds of Chianti as they are made from San Giovese grapes. High demand for these wines has propelled fraud. In 2014, 220,000 bottles of Brunello and Vino Nobile were seized, having been falsely certified as the coveted Chianti. This was not the first scandal. Earlier in 2014 a low-grade table wine was falsely labeled as having been produced on the estate of Andrea Bocelli.

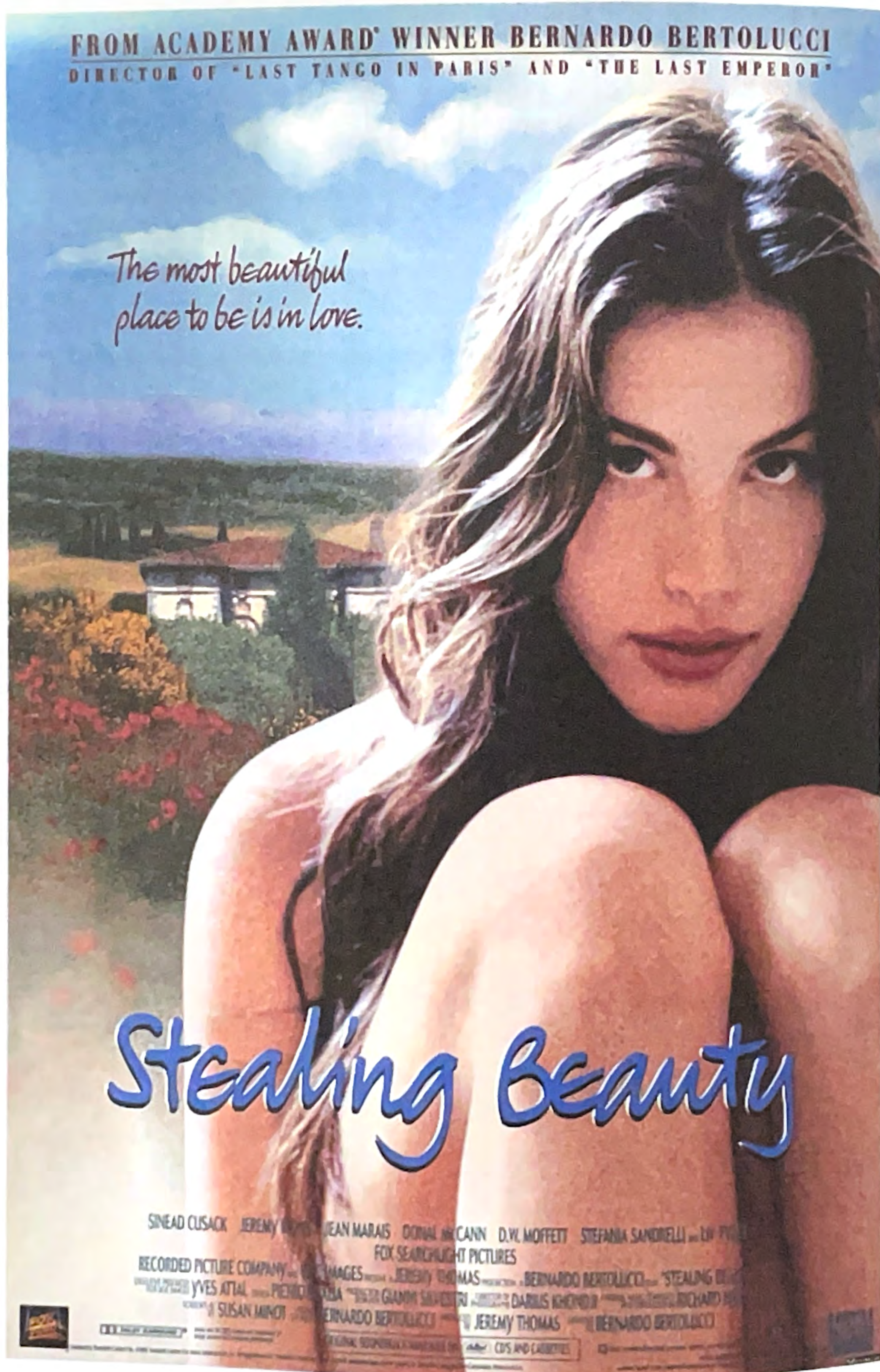
The *fiasco* of Chianti popular into the 20<sup>th</sup> century is not labeled as it typically contains wine blended from several zones or produced from vineyards that do not market their wine. Even when watered down, wine was a social marker for the peasant.

In 1933 the first Mostra dei Vini Tipici d'Italia was held in Tuscany — in Siena at the Fortezza Medicea. For the occasion Virgilio Marchi designed several ephemeral pavilions. A Futurist, Marchi is best known for his film sets (of which he designed over 50). While there is still a wine fair in Siena, there are also many smaller regional exhibitions.

Recently, the Chianti landscape has been threatened — by wild boars who devour vines, including those of the Ricasoli. In hopes of reducing the boar population, hunting season was extended.



*Stealing Beauty* poster. The 1996 movie was filmed at Castello di Brolio a Giaiole in Chianti and the villa of Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli





fication and sun. New-found leisurely pursuits occupied their time — following the trail of Piero della Francesca, enjoying long meals, and becoming preoccupied with their neighbors' activities. The underlying message is that the un-frenetic life, imposed by the idyllic landscape, leads to a greater appreciation of simple, honest, and authentic pleasures.

Bernardo Bertolucci emphasized in his 1996 film *Stealing Beauty* that such pleasures include the release of inhibitions. As the movie tagline claims, "The most beautiful place to be, is in love". Filmed in the heart of Chianti, at property adjacent to the Castello Brolio, the Tuscan countryside provided the perfect backdrop for the love story that unfolded in the film — between an American girl and her Italian suitor as well as the love story between the guests at the hilltop retreat owned by English expatriates and the surrounding countryside.

There are deep roots to the foreign fascination with the simplicity of Tuscany. E. M. Forster chronicled how visiting Tuscany provided an escape from modern life and opportunity for self-discovery. In his 1905 novel *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, the English woman Lilia Herriot travels to Italy in large part to find herself after the death of her husband. She is depicted as being overcome by the natural beauties of the region and in short order she marries a local man from the hill town of "Monteriano" and gives birth to a son who later dies tragically. In the 1991 film *Monteriano* based on Forster's novel (starring Helen Mirren, Helena Bonham Carter, and Judy Davis), the contrast between stuffy English life and the liberated, emotional existence in Italy is firmly established. Honest emotions are seen as flourishing in this simple setting. In the process Forster subverts the Anglo-Italian polarity as it is the Italian who is the fortune hunter.

While it has been noted that Italy today is subject to "romantic and nostalgic" renditions. There is a "thriving post-Romantic tradition of rural, peasant life as the source of authenticity"<sup>1</sup>. The actor Michael Tucker, famous for his role as a partner on the popular late 1980s/early 1990s NBC television series *LA Law*, notes in his memoir of living in a restored farmhouse aptly named *Rustico* that rural life allowed he and his wife, actress Jill Ekenberry, to "slow down [their] hearts and minds until they synched up with the circadian rhythm of the Italian countryside"<sup>2</sup>. Here, Tuscany is "reconfirmed as [the] utopian space of rural simplicity and convivial pleasures"<sup>3</sup>. This is certainly something that musician Sting has sought to celebrate at his farm outside Figline Valdarno south of Florence where he promotes sustainable agriculture while also relaxing and looking at the landscape. But it is also implicitly obvious from an ethno-cultural standpoint. As best-selling author Frances Mayes

<sup>1</sup> Wendy Parkins and Geoffrey Craig, *Slow Living*, (Oxford: Berg, 2006), p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Tucker, *Living in a Foreign Language: A Memoir of Food, Wine and Love in Italy*, (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2007), dust jacket cover.

<sup>3</sup> Parkins and Craig, *Slow Living*, p. 101.





**Andre Brugi cutting board**  
(Photo: <http://www.themommist.com/2015/12/desire-andrea-brugi-chopping-boards.html>)

claims in her book *Bella Tuscany*, “rural Italy... remains purely Italian”<sup>4</sup>. The woodwork of Andrea Brugi from the Tuscan town of Montemerano underscores this. His cutting boards are described as both rustic and contemporary with a strange sense of naivety. According to his website, he draws inspiration from the countryside. How a slow and simple identity has remained central to rural Tuscan life is evidenced in the writing of Mayes. For Mayes, as was the case in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, simplicity continues to be rooted in the rural home — hence the widespread interest with her creation of a second home in Italy and the discussion of otherwise banal details such as replacing roof tiles and a broken water pump, or the publication of photographs of intimate domestic

details such as her desk, bathtub, and bed. Of course, Mayes, like many, conflates simplicity with primitive conditions as well as poverty — something we know not to be the case, particularly when the primitive is being purchased.

Individuals like Mayes have made a career capitalizing on celebrating rural Tuscany in memoirs, travel writing, and culinary books. Her popular 1996 book, *Under the Tuscan Sun*, an autobiographical account of the purchase and restoration of a farmhouse, Bramasole outside Cortona, was on the *New York Times* Bestseller list for 126 weeks, has been translated into more than 18 languages including Chinese, Dutch, Hebrew, Italian, and Swedish, and has been made into a 2003 movie starring Diane Lane and the Italian heartthrob Raoul Bova as her love interest. In the book, Mayes details her desire to retreat from fast-paced life. This theme is continued in her 1999 book, *Bella Tuscany*, which chronicles a 6-month stay at Bramasole and the idiosyncrasies of daily life, as well as her 2000 photographic memoir, *In Tuscany*. Her appealing books have spawned a genre of literature in which “the virtues of slow living are embodied in the practices of rustic life” in which time is devoted to each activity<sup>5</sup>. Perhaps ironically, Mayes’ success is indebted to the very globalized economy it eschews.

<sup>4</sup> Frances Mayes, *Bella Tuscany. The Sweet Life in Italy*, (NY: Broadway Books, 1999) p. xi.  
<sup>5</sup> Parkins and Craig, *Slow Living*, p. 48.





**View from the Torreprima agritourist farmhouse looking towards the hill town of San Gimignano**  
(Photo: [www.torreprima.com](http://www.torreprima.com))



**Aerial view of the Torreprima agritourist farmhouse outside San Gimignano.**  
**The complex is surrounded by olive groves, vineyards and cypress trees** (Photo: [www.torreprima.com](http://www.torreprima.com))

Agritourism is perhaps one of the best testaments to the highly visible role played by rural architecture in today's Tuscany. The rise of agritourism, in which farm houses and farm produce provide alternatives to hotels and restaurants for those seeking the "authentic" Italian experience, has both propelled and, in turn, been strengthened by a renewed interest in returning to the native roots of Tuscan culture.

Once abandoned, farms were often purchased, restored, and modernized largely, although not exclusively, by foreigners seeking a rural repose — albeit with modern amenities. As a result, a huge portion of the Tuscan countryside is no longer agriculture terrain. As we see in Elizabeth Minchilli's lavishly illustrated coffee-table book, *Restoring a Home in Italy*, the vision of the Tuscan farmhouse is now one that has been transformed into an idyllic domestic dream. Today only 6% of the Tuscan land produces food and yet it all looks agricultural. Among the farms that remain active, many capitalize on the desires of tourists who seek, even if briefly, a coexistence with agricultural production in the form of agritourism. It should be noted that undertaking a true agritourist vacation, in which one stays on or in proximity to a farm, is different from renting a villa. Visitors desire the façade of authenticity — good local food, stunningly un-marred views of the Tuscan hills supported by an invisible modern infrastructure (a refrigerator, fancy stove, laundry facilities, indoor plumbing, wireless internet, satellite television, air conditioning and enough water to fill a swimming pool). Each year the region sees an increasing number of "farm tourists". Today a large percentage of formerly working farms have now been restructured as rural vacation destinations. The London-based firm Tuscanynow specializes in renting such locations. Their "peaceful romantic stone farm-



houses set in olive groves” are advertised as providing the perfect honeymoon destination. While many of the sites overlook vineyards, cultivated fields and the hilly countryside between Florence and Siena, the renovated farmhouses are no the longer working farms that would have been familiar to the average sharecropper. Outbuildings and farmyard spaces have been converted into tennis courts and swimming pools. And everything, as Beppe Severgnini reminds us, has been stripped of its stucco so as to reveal the more rustic brickwork.

La Foce’s former farmhouses and outbuildings for example can now be rented<sup>6</sup>. The central *fattoria* provides a venue for weddings, concerts and conferences. Guests can enjoy meals cooked with seasonal products and views across a seemingly unspoiled landscape. A new form of tourism has thus been spawned to provide an opportunity for a rural home-stay and a chance to experience the purportedly slow pace of life first hand. The economic success of agritourism, which combines the overnight stay with the provision of foods produced on site, provides definitive evidence that rural life is seen by many as a retreat from modern life. Tourists flock to spend the night at farms and country houses, enjoy local produce, become friendly with the neighbors, and acquainted with the land. Such tourism is seasonal and local — in that there are no “chains” of farm houses or villas.

The agritourism movement was born in the mid 1970s as a means for the Italian government, in concert with the European Union, to protect the country’s agricultural economy. Of equal importance was the fact that agritourism proved to be a way to preserve the appearance of an agricultural landscape. In 1985 the Italian government published standards for farmers seeking to become certified agritourism destinations. The regulations required that farmers have two years of farm experience and receive training in areas related to hospitality<sup>7</sup>. Most recently, the government’s commitment to agritourism has been reinforced in a 2006 law which requires the “recuperation of rural architecture”, the protection of the landscape, and the production of typical gastronomic products<sup>8</sup>. There are government incentives for agritourism farmers to restore their farm buildings — thereby ensuring that an image of idyllic productivity is maintained. In fact, anyone desiring to open an agritourist site is precluded from building a structure *ex novo*. Various government grants are available for these projects. In 2004 when the supposedly un-

<sup>6</sup> Danielle Pergament, “Tuscany Without the Crowds”, the *New York Times*, March 7, 2010, travel section p. 1, 6-7 and again May 11, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> On the logistics of agritourism see Roxanne Clemens, “Keeping Farmers on the Land: Agritourism in the European Union”, *Iowa Ag Review*, Summer 2004, Vol. 10, No. 3. On the 1986 law see “Disciplina dell’agriturismo. LEGGE 5 dicembre 1985, n. 730”.

<sup>8</sup> On the most recent law see, “Disciplina dell’agriturismo. LEGGE 20 febbraio 2006, n. 96”, *Gazzetta Ufficiale* N. 63 del 16 Marzo 2006.



spoiled landscape of Iris Origo's Orcia valley was placed on UNESCO's list of World Heritage sites the importance of preserving the rural landscape was confirmed.

Tuscany is the most popular agritourism destination in Italy. It contains four times as many sites as neighboring Umbria, and about 20% of all agritourist farms in the country<sup>9</sup>. Italian regulations even seem to favor this disparity — allowing Tuscan farms to have more than twice the number (30) of beds allowed by law for other regions (12)<sup>10</sup>.

Agritourism has had a profound effect on the region. It has fueled the preservation — at least in appearance — of a landscape. Any internet search on Tuscany produces information about farm holidays, but no actual farms. By some accounts Tuscany produces only a small fraction of the olive oil and wine made in all of Italy<sup>11</sup>.

It is agreed by current government officials, tourism entrepreneurs, and tourists alike that there is something inherently Italic about the Italian, and above all Tuscan countryside. Italy continues to profit from a celebration of native culture and struggles to protect that celebration in an increasingly global market where the Olive Garden food chain has emerged as the world's most popular casual dining establishment, and the proliferation of Tuscan style home decor simultaneously celebrates and threatens to erode the base. While the current celebration does not bear the insidiously racist overtones that it did in the 1930s, it still seeks vitality for a cultural identity that is rooted in a specific place and culture.

This network of sites is constantly growing. The Tuscan government recently auctioned off several hundred properties to buyers who demonstrated that they would restore the properties in a manner that would further boost agritourism<sup>12</sup>. There has even emerged a specific form of condo ownership at Borgo di Vagli outside Cortona whereby stakeholders can purchase shares of a restored hamlet beginning at 50,000 euros<sup>13</sup>. While it is interesting that the Italian countryside has held, and continues to hold, "particular cultural and aesthetic resonances", it is particularly striking that the image of the *bel paesaggio* is used to direct consumption practices for an increasingly global community. The *alberata* depicted by Lorenzetti, Gozzoli, and others has emerged as a productive and picturesque landscape that maintains a large fan base. Tuscany is the ultimate MADE IN ITALY product.

<sup>9</sup> These statistics refer to 2007. For statistics on agritourism sites see <http://www.istat.it/agricoltura/datiagri/agniturismo/eleagrit2007.html>, accessed February 24, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Yasuo Ohe and Adriano Ciani, "Evaluation of agritourism activity in Italy: facility based or local culture based", *Tourism Economics*, Vol 17, No. 3, 581-601, p. 592.

<sup>11</sup> According to Gino Cervi and Monica Maraschi, *Authentic Tuscany*, (Milan: Touring Club of Italy, 2005), p. 131 Tuscany produces only 4% of the country's olive oil. According to G. Fontanazza, (*Importance of olive-oil production in Italy*, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, accessed April 7, 2011), the leading regional producers of olive oil are Puglia, Calabria, followed by Sicily.

<sup>12</sup> Megan Mason, "Britons go online to bid for Tuscan idyll", *The London Times*, November 22, 2002.

<sup>13</sup> Christopher Petkanas, "A Tuscan Revival Fulvio Di Rosa's Remarkable Restoration of a Medieval Italian Hamlet", *Architectural Digest*, February 2005, n.p. (advertising insert).



Inherent to today's consumption of the Tuscan countryside is the importance of food — its cultivation, preparation, and eating. Mayes' second memoir, *Bella Tuscany*, is primarily focused on food. She waxes on about "hazelnuts still in their ruffs", green walnuts, artichokes on their stalks, the advantage of buying fresh ricotta, and her olive trees. Recipes are interspersed with loving descriptions of remote valleys and neighboring hill towns. Her book *In Tuscany* similarly presents food discovered while traveling throughout Tuscany coupled with itineraries designed to encounter food. Recipes, and lush photography that borders on gastro porn (romantic blurry images), fill the pages, as the reader is encouraged to journey vicariously with Mayes. Photographs of Mayes purchasing fresh vegetables, or shelves of serving platters that grace her Tuscan kitchen, draw attention to a seemingly personal account of her life in Tuscany — the trips she takes through the countryside, the people she meets, and the food they make, sell, or simply recommend such as Riccardo's Limoncello, Fiorella's Ragù di Funghi Porcini, or Silvia's Torta di Ricotta. Mayes' most recent book is even more explicit in its goal of *Bringing Tuscany Home*, as the title proclaims. The photographs, travel tips, and recipes — including one she invented that won her an award from Barilla pasta — are all provided as "an invitation to a way of being, a guide to the good life". Implicit to this 2004 publication is the notion that one can actually export Tuscany. One can bring back "pillows, parmigiano, stationary, chocolate, wine, duvet covers, and of course shoes" without any loss in the richness of its blessings. If in doubt, she provides a list of shops and sources and a smattering of Italian terms that will come in handy while shopping.

Agritourism is a business that caters to Italians as well as foreigners, along with "the recent revival of folk festivals and traditions, suggest[s] that peasant Italy has finally achieved the same status within the urban post-modern Italian imaginary which it has long enjoyed abroad"<sup>14</sup>. Events such as the revived *Festa dell'Uva* in the Tuscan town of Impruneta, located south of Florence, today are organized by and for the local community. Recent examples abound in which Italians demonstrate their interest in protecting and capitalizing on the Italian countryside. A *treno di natura*, or nature train, made up of antique cars now wends its way through the Tuscan Orcia river valley and beyond. The train slows down the pace of tourism; it stops to allow passengers to enjoy country walks and visits to the abbey of Monte Oliveto Maggiore, and the towns of Montalcino and Siena.

Current Italian leaders have sought to protect the image of Italian culture — beginning with food. The so-called "Slow Food Movement", launched in Italy in response to the opening of the first McDonalds in Rome in the mid-1980s, has sought to impede the fur-

<sup>14</sup> Parkins and Craig, *Slow Living*, p. 101.



ther invasion of fast food restaurants into Italy and, in the process, protect what is considered to be a national treasure. Slow food can range from beans to *lardo* as long as it is typical to a region. The movement's robust bi-monthly journal *Slowfood* is filled with essays celebrating the perseverance of regional recipes, methods of food production, and ways of eating. Some have argued that prior to the Slow Food movement, traditional Italian foodways such as pasta and bread were endangered. Today, various regions have launched a certificate program for "authentic" Italian restaurants. Those that prepare food with local produce, sell regional wines, and maintain respect for typical recipes receive the designation of *Ristorante Tipico*. In addition, small-scale farmers receive various forms of support. And of course, the importance of food is reinforced beginning in primary school where children enjoy un-hurried multi-course lunches and their eating habits are noted in their grade reports<sup>15</sup>.

In October 2004, the Slow Food Organization sponsored a World Meeting of Food Communities in conjunction with their annual *Salone del Gusto* in Turin. Intended to create networks of exchange amongst local producers, the event — named *Terra Madre* and subsequently held bi-annually — sought to create a new appreciation for the seasonality of rural life<sup>16</sup>. In a post-modern geography, the artisianal foods of Tuscany has become so popular that the region is falling victim to its own success. The high demand for artisan cheeses, wines, and olive oils has meant that many small family-run firms are no longer able to produce enough to meet the demand. Some firms have resorted to diluting their product in order to keep business booming. Scandalous revelations have resulted including the fact that some Italian olive oil producers have resorted to mixing their oil with that produced in Spain, Turkey, and Tunisia<sup>17</sup>. And it appears that some olive oil is not really olive oil at all.

More recently, a million bottles of Montalcino Brunello wine was confiscated by prosecutors investigating whether grapes other than the requisite Sangiovese were pressed to produce a higher yield of wine<sup>18</sup>. New laws have been proposed to regulate the quality of the production of foods that have come to represent the regional olive oil, wine, and cheese. It is intriguing that the Italian foodstuffs now protected by the cultural and political elite are the same foodstuffs celebrated for their simple native character and abundance during the Italian push towards native consumption in the 1930s<sup>19</sup>.

What makes the story of diluted olive oil particularly fascinating is that concurrent with the

<sup>15</sup> Alessandra Stanley writes about her experience with child lunches in a Roman school, see "It Looks Like the Lunch Menu. It's Really Your Child's Report Card", *The New York Times*, October 31, 1999.

<sup>16</sup> For organization press releases and articles published in Italian newspapers see <http://www.terramadre.info/pagine/press/elenco.lasso?id=010&rev=006>, accessed January 14, 2009.

<sup>17</sup> Tom Mueller, "Slippery Business; Letter from Italy", *The New Yorker*, August 13, 2007, p. 38. See also his book *Extra Virginity: The Sublime and Scandalous World of Olive Oil* (New York: WW Norton & Co., 2012).

<sup>18</sup> See Elisabetta Povoledo, "Bolt from the Blue on a Tuscan Red", *The New York Times*, April 23, 2008, p. F1 and F5.

<sup>19</sup> See for example "L'autarchia agricola. L'olivicoltura nazionale verso ulteriori sviluppi — Il nuovo raccolto granario Chiarimenti per la panificazione", *Il Giornale d'Italia*, August 7, 1938, p. 2.



## How McDonalds has Tried to be Slow

There are more than 25 McDonalds in Tuscany — in Arezzo, Cecina, Città del Castello, Figline Valdarno, Florence, Lucca, Livorno, Pistoia, Prato, Pisa, Pontedra, Siena. There are four drive-thrus and two 24-hour franchises in Florence alone. Two of these have playlands and offer birthday parties. One of the Florentine franchises is located across the street from the Santa Maria Novella train Station in a prime location for capturing the attention of travelers — including the hungry Junior Year Abroad students. That said, the chain is wildly popular amongst Tuscans as well.

McDonalds has been in Italy since 1986 when it opened a franchise in Rome adjacent to the high rent district and tourist hot spot — the Spanish steps. This precipitated the birth of the Slow Food Movement, spawned to counter the invasion of Fast Food to Italy and preserve traditional and regional cuisine. Today there are 450 franchises of McDonalds in Italy selling an estimated 1 billion euros of food annually. The fast food chain has promised to open 100 more.

Roberto Burdese of the Slow Food movement said McDonald's menus could not provide a balanced diet on a daily basis. As if in response, the chain has inaugurated a series of gastronomic initiatives. In 2010 they introduced the McItaly burger which featured a 100 percent MADE IN ITALY beef patty, Asiago cheese and artichoke spread. More than 3 million McItaly burgers were sold in the first two months. McItaly burger ads, featuring an image of Italy stamped into ground beef, aired not just in Italy, but throughout Europe. In 2013 McDonalds teamed up with Barilla, the world's leading pasta manufacturer, to produce a pasta salad. Most recently the chain has introduced the kiwi-stick, fruit that can be eaten as if it were a lollipop. Kiwi, raised in the Agro-Pontino countryside south of Rome, has been promoted as a national fruit. Keep in mind — McDonalds has brought innovation to Italy as prior to its existence there was nothing like a hamburger. McDonalds has launched an intense PR campaign to promote their food including full page advertisements in the newspaper, television commercials — including the 2015 spot which outlined how their French fries were made from whole potatoes — and web tutorials which show how the chain exercises control over the farming methods of the products it uses, ensuring that their food is produced in Italy.

opposite  
McDonalds,  
Florence  
(Photo: Cosimo  
Lipparini)









White bean soup (Photo: food52.com)

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## Beans

Many Tuscan dishes come from a history of famine and poverty. Beans are the ultimate *Cucina Povera*. It is said that beans are the meat of the poor. As Emanuela Scarpellini reminds us, meat consumption was so rare that its presence sent a strong social message.

Beans can stave off hunger while being nutritious and inexpensive, with a long shelf life, they have often been seen as an ideal crop for small pieces of land. They are also Tuscan. There are more bean recipes in Tuscany than anywhere else in Italy: bean soup, beans béchamel for those who had access to butter, sformato for those who had both butter and meat sauce, beans with herbs, sautéed with tomato sauce.

In 2002 the Sorana bean of the province of Pistoia obtained PGI (Protected Geographical Identification) status. The Sorana bean along with the Red bean of Lucca have received attention from the Slow Food movement.

*Ribolitta* is perhaps the most famous bean recipe. It is a bean-based vegetable soup that incorporates whatever is on hand, including leftover bread and yesterday's minestrone soup.





Lardo (Photo: [grandi.chef.com](http://grandi.chef.com))

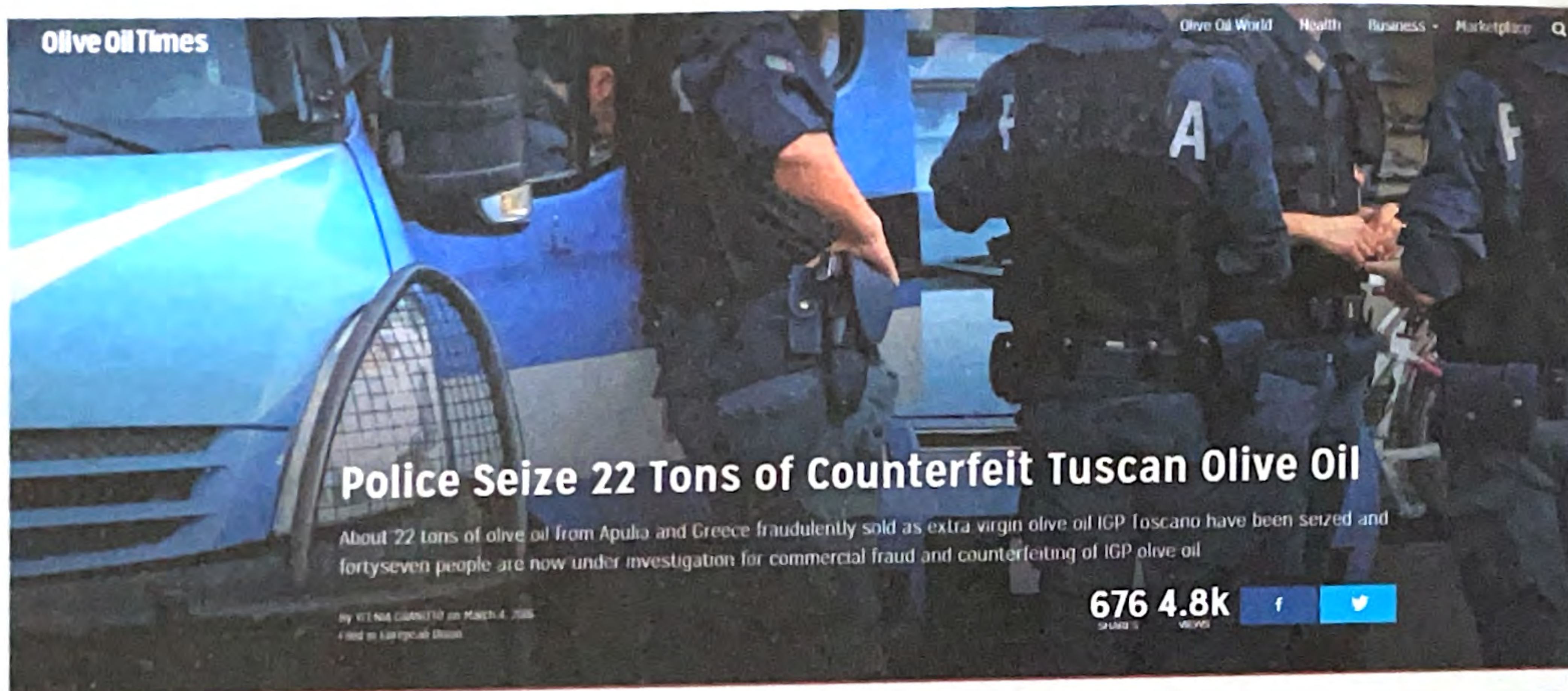
## Lardo

Lardo is the ultimate slow food. *Lardo* — or cured pork fat — which dates back to the Middle Ages, is a Tuscan specialty served in various locales. The most famous version hails from Colonnata near Carrara where pig fat is cured for 6-9 months with herbs (pepper, rosemary, and garlic and sometimes sage, star anise, oregano, coriander, or even cinnamon, cloves or nutmeg) in basins of Carrara marble known as *conche da lardo*. Lardo was considered to be the ultimate peasant food — highly caloric and a thirst quencher. In Tuscany it was preferred by many to olive oil.

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*Olive Oil Times, March 4, 2016 (Photo: [www.oliveoiltimes.com/olive-oil-business/europe/police-seize-counterfeit-tuscan-olive-oil/50778](http://www.oliveoiltimes.com/olive-oil-business/europe/police-seize-counterfeit-tuscan-olive-oil/50778))*

### Faking the Olive Oil

In early March 2016, 22 tons of olive oil from Puglia and Greece being labeled as Tuscan was confiscated at 47 different locations (millers, bottlers and vineyards) in Tuscany. Using DNA analysis, this operation was carried out by more than 100 officials from Tuscany and Umbria. Fake olive oil is not new. According to some statistics, as much as 50 % of Italian olive oil is somehow fraudulent — not made where it is said to be made (Greek, Spanish, Turkish, Syrian, Moroccan and Tunisian oil is often labelled as Italian), adulterated with low-grade oils (such as soy bean oil, hazelnut oil, sunflower seed oil and even lamp oil) or artificially colored. At times olive oil has been the most adulterated agricultural product. This is significant for Italy, the largest producer of olive oil in the world (accounting for 25%) and for Tuscany, which is associated with oil production — even if the region only produces 4% of Italian oil. Even London's Harrods was forced to remove (in 2014) Tuscan olive oil from shelves as it was bottled in the U.K.

Olive oil is time-consuming and difficult to produce and yet easy to adulterate. For this reason olive-oil producers in Tuscany formed a consortium in 1997 governed by strict rules as to how olive oil is to be made. Despite these tightened restrictions fraud persists. Olive oil consumption has increased dramatically (by 35% between 1998-2008), and tasting bars proliferate. There is even an olive oil school in Florence. Celebrities have entered the fray. Sting produces organic extra virgin olive oil on his Tuscan estate. Frances Mayes claims that she hand-picks olives every fall and grinds them in an “artisanal manner” so that “each spoonful of this sublime oil connects us to the roots of life in this ancient Tuscan landscape”.



marketing of Italian olive oil that was not truly Italian, the Italian government was busily attacking foreign companies who purportedly sold “Italian” foodstuffs.

Tuscany has become the inspiration for the North Carolina based Drexel Heritage company's *At Home in Tuscany* collection launched in April 2003. With a selection of “semi-custom” furniture including the “Bramasole Bed”, Tuscany's treasures can now be purchased to furnish neo-bourgeois homes. Mayes is quoted in the advertising campaign for Drexel Heritage, “Once you discover the voluptuousness of Tuscany, any other life is hard to imagine”. The colorful campaign was photographed on location in Cortona and at Mayes' own Villa Bramasole — which served as the perfect backdrop for the promotion of beds, tables, and chairs inspired by the region that could, in Mayes' words, “anchor anyone's dreams”. As if to authenticate the collection, the advertising copy simultaneously promotes Mayes' book, *Under the Tuscan Sun*, and the feature film based on that book. Here Mayes has begun to cash in on popular kitsch.

The Slow Food Movement has since expanded into the *Cittàslow* or Slow Cities Movement, alternatively known as the *Ben Essere* project. Launched by the former mayor of Greve in Chianti south of Florence, to preserve the traditional way of life in small towns with populations under 50,000, the *Ben Essere* project seeks to preserve distinctive regional crafts, local agricultural markets, and the *siesta* and, in the process, ensure heightened sensory experience. More than 50 towns have now been enlisted as a part of the project including, among others, Greve in Chianti, Bra, Castelnuovo Berardenga, Massa Marittima, Orvieto, Positano, Todi, Trani, and Urbino. Orvieto mayor Stefano Cimicchi claims that the ideal model for a Città Slow is “the late-medieval and Renaissance [town], with the piazza functioning as a center of social aggregation”<sup>20</sup>. The idea of centering civic life within the confines of a distinctive architectural space is central to the definition of these towns. The qualification process for a new Slow City requires that the various segments of the communal government agree to follow the Città Slow charter. The designation requires that the community eschew standardized global culture including food, the fast paced way of life, and the pressures of globalization to remain dedicated to sustaining traditional life, something achieved through “rituals, customs, the use of local resources, the deployment of particular skills, as well as the production and consumption of local produce”<sup>21</sup>. The participation of towns within the movement requires a clear “mindful consciousness” of how life is lived in specific spaces. They have aptly concluded, the designation is ultimately an “effective exercise in civic branding”,

<sup>20</sup> Parkins and Craig, *Slow Living*, p. 78.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81



serving as a “device designed to enhance the tourism industry”<sup>22</sup>. These towns have entered into the “experience economy” providing “memorable personal experiences based on heightened sensations and active participation”<sup>23</sup>. Inhabitants and visitors alike are supposed to become mindfully conscious of the space they occupy”<sup>24</sup>. Today both Italian and foreign tourists seek out these towns as a refuge from fast-paced, globalized existence in “impersonal and a-historical spaces”<sup>25</sup>, or what Marc Augé would call “non-places”.

The project has garnered substantial interest — including being the subject of a *Newsweek* cover story that noted that these towns have declared “themselves havens from the accelerating pace of life in the global economy”<sup>26</sup>. To call further attention to the organization, Città Slow Awards are now given for the successful implementation of “slow principles in the urban design” of large (and not necessarily Italian) cities<sup>27</sup>. Paris mayor Bertrand Delanoë won in 2002 for his efforts to diversify the socio-economic demographics of those residing in the city center and reduce vehicular traffic by introducing 20,000 rental bikes available at stations throughout the city. Delanoë, the city’s first socialist mayor, was subsequently re-elected (in 2008) for a second six-year term and was one of the finalists for the 2008 World Mayor Award.

In a conversation with officials in Mayor Paolo Santurnini’s office in Greve in Chianti, it became clear that at the center of the Città Slow movement lies a nuanced relationship between architecture, politics, and the implicit sense of moral superiority that resonates with that propagated during the 1930s<sup>28</sup>. There is the fear of the “homogenizing effects of global capitalism”<sup>29</sup>, but also clearly a fear of the introduction of non-Italian culture. That is to say, a fundamental goal of Santurnini’s project is to preclude the dilution of Italic culture through the introduction of non-Italian traditions and cultures, or peoples — specifically the immigrants arriving in large numbers from Africa, Eastern Europe, the Dalmatian coast, the Middle East and China. The Tuscan town of Lucca has gone so far as to prohibit the opening of any new ethnic restaurants within the historic center, prompted largely by the popularity of several inexpensive Turkish and Pakistani kebob shops<sup>30</sup>. The mayor’s office in the town of Prato has begun to address the profound

opposite  
Advertisement  
for the *At Home  
In Tuscany*  
furniture  
collection  
produced by  
Drexel Heritage,  
2008  
(Photo: Author)

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>26</sup> Rana Foroohar, “Eat, Drink, and Go Slow”, *Newsweek*, July 2, 2001, pp. 18-22) p. 18.

<sup>27</sup> Parkins and Craig, *Slow Living*, p. 79.

<sup>28</sup> See the *Manifesto delle Cittaslow* (n.d., no place of publication), the *Carta Costitutiva* (Orvieto: Ufficio Comunicazione Cittaslow, October 15, 1999) and the *Statuto dell’Associazione Cittaslow*, (n.d., no place of publication).

<sup>29</sup> Parkins and Craig, *Slow Living*, p. 70.

<sup>30</sup> Rachel Donadio, “A Walled City in Tuscany Clings to its Ancient Menu”, *The New York Times*, March 13.





"I feel the privilege  
of living in Italian light,  
being shown the light of each hour, day, and season."

Frances Mayes



influence of Chinese textile workers who have become increasingly responsible for producing fast-fashion sporting a MADE IN ITALY label<sup>31</sup>. The immigrant communities, whose foreign culture and traditions are understood as a threat to Tuscan cultural traditions, are the very same that have proved to be essential in sustaining Tuscany. Guest workers or *extra-comunitari*, as they are known are seasonally employed to work in the vineyards and olive groves as well as textile companies, facilitating the production of the wine and olive oils that define the region<sup>32</sup>.

The Slow Cities Charter claims that one of the association's objectives is to

safeguard autochthonous production [that is] rooted in culture and tradition, which contributes to the typification of an area, maintaining its modes and mores and promoting preferential occasions and spaces for direct contacts between consumers and quality producers<sup>33</sup>.

And here lies an important connection to Fascist era policies of self-sufficiency of the 1930s. Native culture was spatially engaged. The discussion of how space was mediated, understood, and used was connected to contemporary politics. And so too it has re-emerged.

A similar response to the threat of globalization has been the recent lawsuit filed by the president of the Tuscan region, who claims that the Tuscan landscape has become trivialized by the commercialization of companies and products that are in no way Tuscan. Coca Cola, Lucent Technologies, Volvo, Volkswagen, and Ford have all recently shot television commercials in the Tuscan hills. Some of these advertisements have been shot on the cypress-lined road that Cecil Pinsent designed on the Origo estate in Val d'Orcia. This is a road that while owned by the commune of Pienza is also claimed by the towns of Montepulciano and Chianciano Terme. Tuscany has emerged as the perfect picturesque backdrop for advertising just about anything.

As a consequence, the Federation president Vannino Chiti sought to copyright the landscape — successfully passing a law in March of 1999 that sought to “weed out those products” that are not Tuscan, nor even necessarily Italian, but nevertheless “try to associate and sell themselves with images of Tuscany”<sup>34</sup>. So while it would be justifiable for Ferrag-

opposite  
Nikon  
advertisement  
(Photo: Collection  
of the Author)

2009, p. A6.

<sup>31</sup> Rachel Donadio, “Stitched in Italy, by Chinese: Newcomers Redefine a Label”, *The New York Times*, September 13, 2010, p. 1 and A6.

<sup>32</sup> On the communities of Albanians hired to harvest grapes in Tuscany see Rachel Donadio, “Albanians Adjust to Italy, In Unlikeliest of Places”, *The New York Times*, Friday, October 3, 2008, p. A11.

<sup>33</sup> *Carta Costitutiva*.

<sup>34</sup> Celestine Bohlen, “For Tuscans, How Can you Copyright Paradise” *New York Times*, August 7, 1997, p. A4. On the polemics surrounding the copyright law see Maurizio Bologni, “Un’industria locale e il copyright sul paesaggio”, in *Ciak in Toscana. I set del cinema e della pubblicità in terra di Siena* (Florence: Le Lettere, 2000), pp. 124-126.



amo to advertise its cologne “Tuscan Soul” a men and womens’ fragrance released in the fall of 2008 that recalls fig trees, against the backdrop of the Tuscan hills, for Acqua Panna (Tuscany’s premier bottled water to capitalize on being the “taste of Tuscany”, it is not acceptable to see children chugging Coca Cola or Nikon proclaiming that fine photography and landscape merge against the same backdrop. While the law proved to be ambiguous, implicit in Chiti’s argument was the idea that there is something inherently and uniquely Tuscan about the countryside. This is an idea that was first articulated by the Renaissance writer Alberti, deployed during the Fascist regime, and most recently used in branding the region. There is no doubt that it has remained vital to the definition of a Tuscan landscape.

The desire to protect and preserve the Italian landscape has recently become a *cause celebre* — outside of Italy as well. In an article entitled “What ever happened to la *bella Italia*?” the *Art Newspaper* has invited readers to send in snapshots of “the most egregious examples of Italian uglification” that disrupt the “heart-breakingly exquisite views” of the countryside<sup>35</sup>. The bi-monthly *InChianti* newsletter similarly seeks to reaffirm Tuscany. Subscribers receive information about Chiantishire — its “idyllic landscape, unique lifestyle and famous products”. From their website, one can enjoy a photo gallery and send a “beautiful postcard of Chianti”<sup>36</sup>. Aimed at “residents and visitors alike”, the newspaper seeks to celebrate the special unique region where tradition, culture, and craftsmanship go hand in hand.

In all of this, a variety of Italian organizations (public, corporate, and private) have done what they can to ensure that the Tuscan landscape remains unchanged — or at least retains an illusion of unchanging beauty. Italy’s economic future continues to depend upon the construction of an image of a nation rooted in, and connected to, its past. While the modality of this

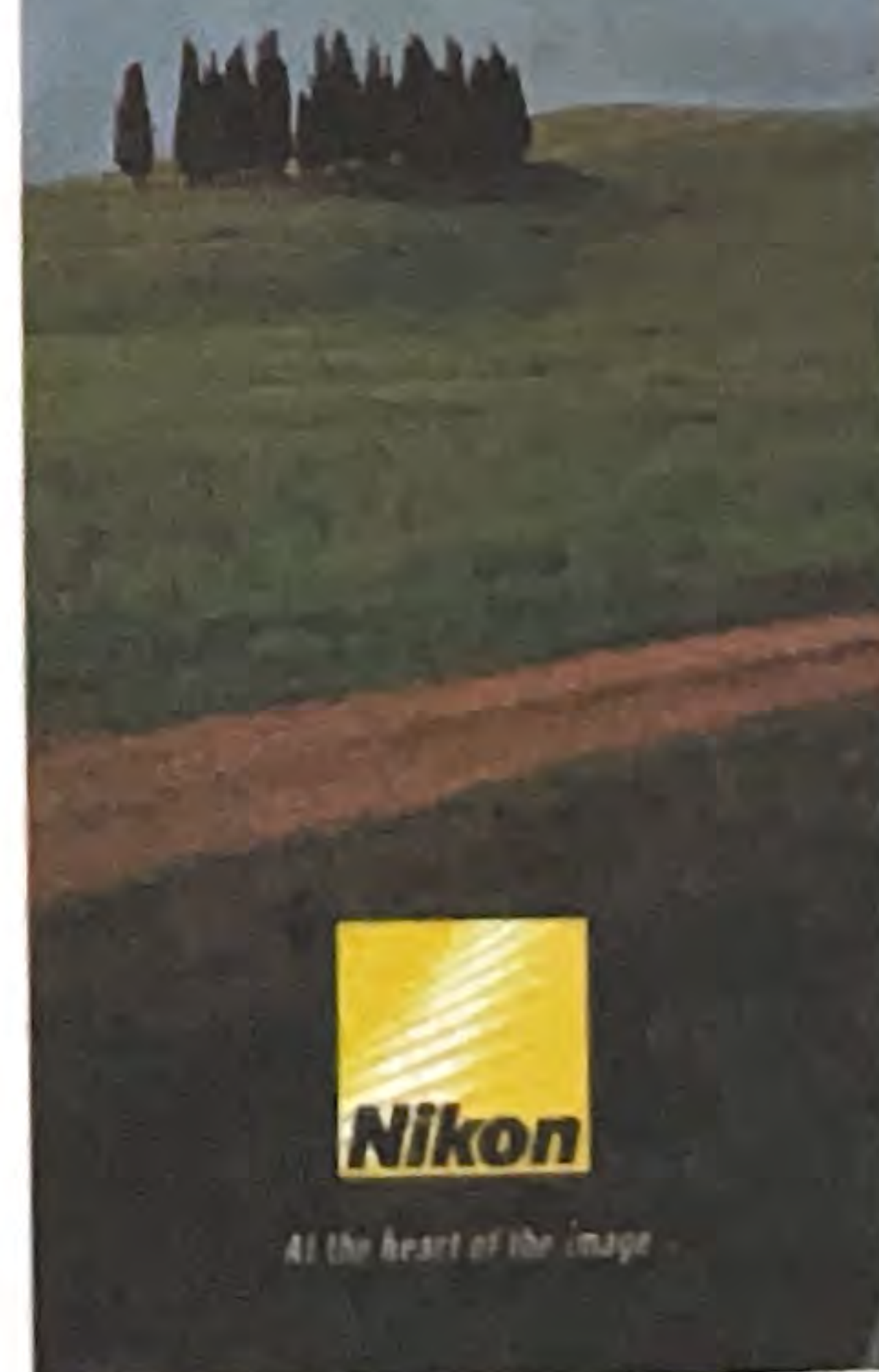
<sup>35</sup> “What ever happened to la *bella Italia*?” *The Art Newspaper*, No. 149, July-August, 2004.

<sup>36</sup> See *INCHIANTI A Magazine to promote the Chianti region of Tuscany* accessed at [www.chiantishire.org/inchianti.php](http://www.chiantishire.org/inchianti.php) on January 4, 2008.

Now, taking a luxury trip to the hill towns of Tuscany is as easy as taking great pictures.

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Advertisement for Acqua Panna (Photo: [www.acquapanna.com/en](http://www.acquapanna.com/en))

E

### **Bottled Water in Tuscany**

The Italian culinary craze includes bottled mineral water imported from Italy, distributed by various companies including San Pellegrino and Acqua Panna, the latter of which is advertised as the “taste of Tuscany”. The taste of water changes according to its mineral composition, as outlined in the labeling of each of Italy’s 280 different kinds of water. Mineral composition is not even mentioned in American bottled waters such as PepsiCo’s Aquafina (note the Italian name), thus underscoring the perceived nuance and superiority of Italian foodstuffs.

But there is more — a pedigree that dates back to the Renaissance. As one of 19 different waters bottled in Tuscany, the Acqua Panna brand has been recognized since the time of the Medici as an important component of fine dining, or so the Aqua Panna website proclaims. In 2014 the water received the official “Tuscany Taste” logo issued by the region to celebrate the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tuscan estate. So, similar to the way in which *Bon Appetit* makes sure that beans and arugula are ingredients in menus that mention great masters such as Michelangelo and da Vinci, mineral water is legitimized through its Tuscan roots.



construction has undergone a certain metamorphosis over the decades — to become a nostalgic escape from modernity rather than the generator of modernity — one could argue that it is only through modern mass media that this artificial stretch of land can be profitable. In other words, the past and present continue to collapse into each other and elements of Fascist rhetoric continue to survive. Why else would an advertisement for Sagra olive oil show a man in naked communion with the land — what the 1930s architectural critic Bino Sanminateli would have referred to as the “virile and sweet” nature of the Tuscan landscape?

By celebrating Tuscan traditions, the message was that one could derive what it meant to be Tuscan from the rural and, in turn, what it meant to be Italian from Tuscany. The role played by the architects associated with the Florence architecture school, coupled with the strong local institutional support for folkloric and ethnographic studies, and the familiar appeal of the Tuscan landscape, or *alberata*, meant that the discussion of rural architecture was, for many years, largely centered on Tuscany.

Today’s image of the Tuscan landscape, as a nostalgic and picturesque throwback to a bygone era, is indeed distinct from that cultivated during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Fascist regime, and beyond. The Tuscan rural landscape has remained a centerpiece of Italian culture despite the fact that many of the realities remain hidden and certain aspects are selectively featured.



## **Further Reading**







Carnival  
float,  
Viareggio  
(Photo:  
Fototeca  
ENT)

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## **Lists**







Pinocchio  
on a tricycle,  
toy c. 1940  
(Photo:  
Alinari  
PGC-F-  
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0000)

## Pinocchio Ate

- a pot of beans
- a little bread
- the crust of dried bread
- a bone for a dog
- a little mush
- a fish bone
- a kernel of a cherry
- a nice big egg cooked with water not oil or butter
- three pears
- the skins of three pears
- bread crumbs
- a mouthful of meat and some bread
- a ball of sugar
- a bunch of grapes
- a small basket of chick peas
- a piece of cauliflower dipped in oil and vinegar
- a piece of cake

## Pinocchio Drank

- bitter water
- a little basin of water
- a sip of water



**and Dreamed of**

- a boat loaded with preserved meat, figs, biscuits, wine, raisins, coffee, sugar,
- a boiling pot with clouds of steam all around it in the fireplace
- bread, chicken and four apricots
- a cellar filled with good things
- a library filled with candy
- Dutch cake
- almond cake
- a cinnamon stick
- for the cat; thirty-five mullets with tomato sauce and four portions of tripe with butter and cheese
- for the fox; a nice fresh rabbit dressed with the giblets of chicken, some partridges, pheasants, frogs, lizards, and some bird of paradise eggs



**Sophia Peabody and Nathaniel Hawthorne** spent more than 8 months in Italy in 1857. They were in Florence for the months of June-September. During June and July they rented 13 rooms on a floor of the Casa del Bello — across the street from the studio of American sculptor Hiram Powers. Their accommodations came with a servant name Stella. In August they moved to Fiesole — to the Villa Montauto, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century villa near Vincigliata. During Sophia Hawthorne's time in Florence she visited sites repeatedly and called upon individuals (such as Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning) on numerous occasions. She wrote about her time in Tuscany in *Notes in England & Italy*, (NY: G. P. Putnam & Sons, 1870). These are the places she went:

- Arezzo:
  - Petrarch's House
  - Cathedral
  - Santa Maria della Pieve
- Florence:
  - Pitti Palace
  - Loggia de' Lanzi
  - bridges spanning the Arno
  - Duomo
  - Giotto's Campanile
  - Baptistery
  - Piazza della Signoria
  - Palazzo Vecchio
  - Lungarno
  - Hotel New York, to call on the Bryants
  - Casa Guidi, to call on the Brownings
  - Palace of Bianca Capello
  - The bronze boar
  - Ponte di St Trinità
  - Uffizi
  - Pitti Palace
  - Boboli gardens
  - Hiram Powers' Studio
  - The Cascine
  - Academy of Arts, Hall of Casts



- Church of St Lorenzo
- Medici Chapel
- Statue of Giovanni di Medici outside San Lorenzo
- Eve of St John — decorations of Ponte Vecchio
- Ponte Santa Trinità and Ponte Carraja
- Sante Croce
- Palazzo of Niccolo dell'Antella
- Palazzo Riccardi and frescoes of Benozzo Gozzoli
- Villa Bellosguardo
- Academy of Arts, the Pietre-dure Rooms
- House of Michel Angelo
- Refectory of the Convent of San Onofrio
- Egyptian Museum
- Santa Maria Novella
- Santo Spirito
- Santissima Annunziata
- Strozzi Palace
- Museum adjacent to the Pitti Palace (what is now the Specola Museum)
- San Marco
- Villa Tassinari
- Church of La Badia
- silk establishment of Lombardi, in the Piazza Maria Antonia (Piazza dell'Indipendenza)
- Church of the Santa Trinità, Ghirlandaio's frescoes.
- Guadagni and Corsini galleries
- walk to the Ducal Villa, out of the Porta Romana at the Porta San Miniato
- Or San Michele
- Palace of the Knights Templar to call upon Mr Kirkup, the antiquary, artist, and magician
- Museum of Natural History
- Villa Brichieri, to call upon the British Minister
- Fiesole — Church and Convent of St Domenico
- Laurentian Library
- Siena:
  - Cathedral
  - Palazzo Pubblico
  - Institute of Fine Arts
  - Baptistery
  - St. Agostino
  - San Francesco

Buonconvento

San Quirico d'Orcia

Radicofani



**John Ruskin** wrote *Mornings in Florence: Being Simple Studies of Christian Art for English Travellers* in which he advised readers how to look and what to look at. This was first published in serial form and then as a book in 1881. He wrote about:

Campanile of the Duomo

Church of Santa Croce:

- chapel of the Bardi\Giotto
- Galileo of the Galilei-tomb slab

Baptistery

Santa Maria Novella:

- Green cloister
- Spanish Chapel

Uffizi

Cathedral

Bargello Museum of Sculpture

Church of San Lorenzo

Artists of Note:

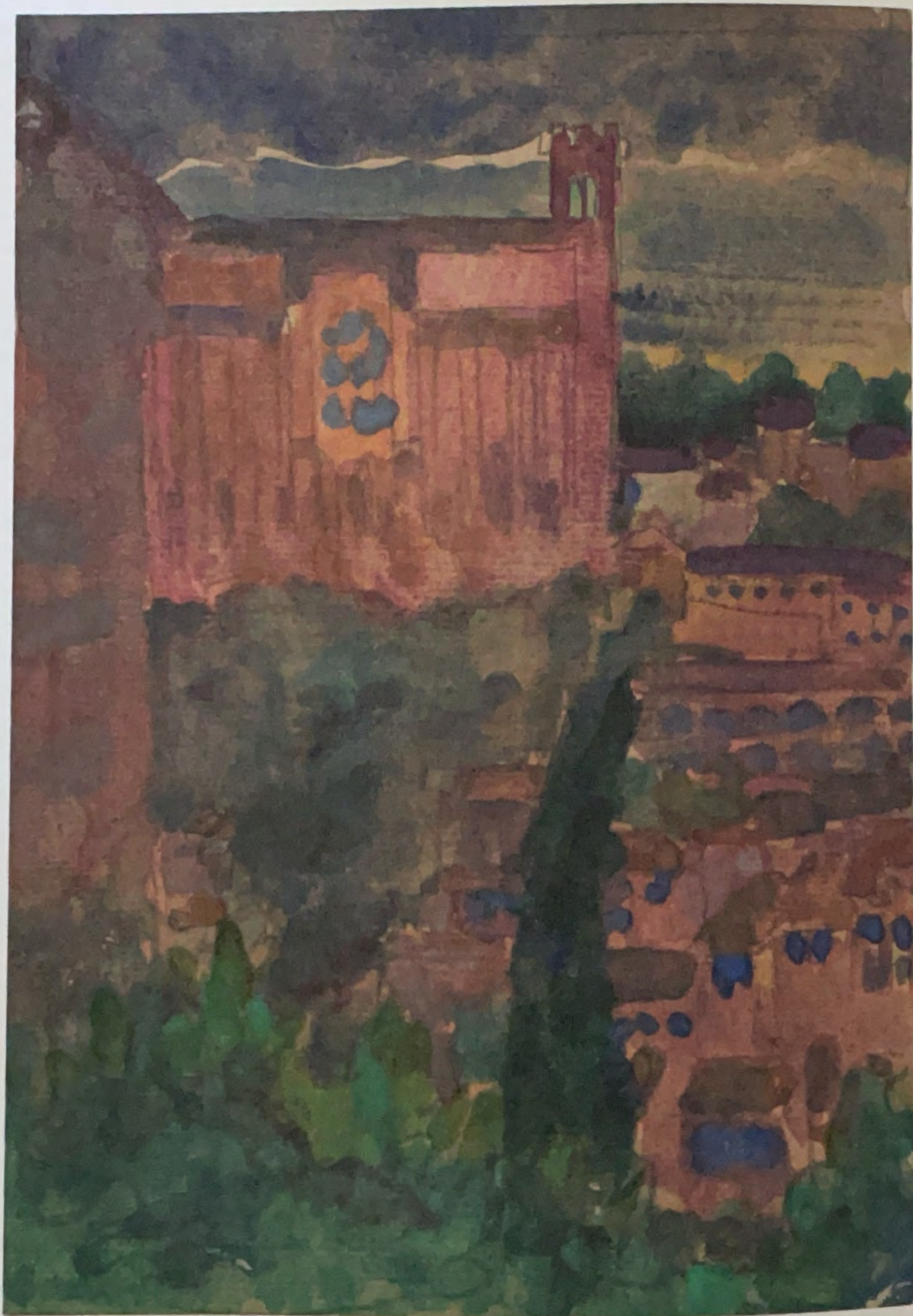
- Sandro Botticelli
- Cimabue
- Fra Angelico
- Luca della Robbia
- Taddeo and Angelo[sic] Gaddi
- Giotto
- Ghirlandaio
- Gozzoli
- Ambrogio Lorenzetti
- Simon and Philip Memmi
- Mino da Fiesole
- Orcagna
- Giovanni Pisano
- Andrea Pisano
- Luca della Robbia

Outside Florence:

- Tomb of Ilaria di Caretto, Lucca
- Camposanto, Santa Maria della Spina, Pisa
- Luca della Robbia in Pistoia



Charles-Edouard  
Jeanneret, view  
of the church of  
San Domenico,  
Siena, 1907, pen  
and watercolor  
on paper  
(Photo:  
Foundation Le  
Corbusier)





**Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris**, (later known as Le Corbusier), traveled to Tuscany for a month spanning September and early October of 1907, rented a room at the corner of Via dei Calzaioli and the Piazza della Signoria. He traveled with a copy of Hippolyte Taine's *Voyage en Italie* and John Ruskin's *Les Matins à Florence* IMAGE He visited these sites:

- Pisa:
  - Piazza dei Miracoli (Duomo, Baptistery, Leaning Tower, Camposanto) paying particular attention to the frescoes of Gozzoli and Orcagna
- Pistoia:
  - San Bartolomeo in Pantano
- Prato:
  - Cathedral
- Florence:
  - Giotto's Campanile
  - Santa Maria Novella — including the Green cloister and Spanish Chapel
  - San Miniato
  - San Marco
  - The Academy
  - San Lorenzo
  - The Medici Chapel
  - Certosa in Galluzzo
  - Palazzo Vecchio
  - Bargello
  - Archaeology Museum
  - Uffizi
  - Pitti Palace
  - Piazza Signoria
  - Loggia dei Lanzi
  - Santa Croce
  - Badia
  - Orsanmichele
  - Dome of Brunelleschi
  - Donatello's Cantoria at San Lorenzo
  - Medici tombs at San Lorenzo
  - Benozzo Gozzoli in the Palazzo Medici Riccardi
  - San Miniato
  - Museum of the Duomo
  - Baptistery
- Fiesole
- Siena:
  - Duomo
  - Baptistery
  - San Domenico
  - Piazza del Campo
  - Palazzo Pubblico





**Hitler and Mussolini (accompanied by Joseph Goebbels, Giovanni Poggi and others) study a painting in the Pitti Palace during Hitler's visit in 1938**  
(Photo: *Life Magazine*)

**Hitler at the Piazzale Michelangelo, Florence**  
(Photo: *Life Magazine*)

next pages  
**Arnold Böcklin, *Isle of the Dead*, 1883, 3<sup>rd</sup> version, oil on panel 150 x 80 cm., collection of the Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin**  
(Photo: Alte Nationalgalerie, public domain)

**Adolph Hitler.** In May of 1938 Hitler made a state visit to Rome, Naples and Florence. Mussolini met Hitler at the Santa Maria Novella train station on May 8<sup>th</sup>. From there they travelled in an open car accompanied by a motorcade with 19 other cars to various sites in the city. They were accompanied by the German-speaking Italian art historian, Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli who provided descriptions of what they were looking at. At the Piazzale Michelangelo, Hitler noted that the view reminded him of one of his favorite paintings, the *Isle of the Dead* painted by the Swiss painter Arnold Böcklin in Florence in 1883 and acquired by Hitler in 1933. During the Florentine excursion, dinner was held at the Palazzo Medici Riccardi with more than 100 invited guests including members of the Gruppo Toscano. The meal included cream of vegetable soup, sole fillet, veal medallion with peas, chicken breast with asparagus salad, gelato, small pastries, large strawberries in orange juice, coffee, and Tuscan wines. The sites Hitler saw included:

- Shrine of the Fascist Martyrs, Basilica of Santa Croce
- view from Piazzale Michelangelo
- Boboli Gardens
- Pitti Palace
- the Vasari Corridor
- Uffizi Gallery
- Piazza Signoria
- Ponte Vecchio
- Palazzo Medici Riccardi for dinner
- Teatro Comunale for a performance of Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra*
- Piazza Vittorio Veneto, for fireworks



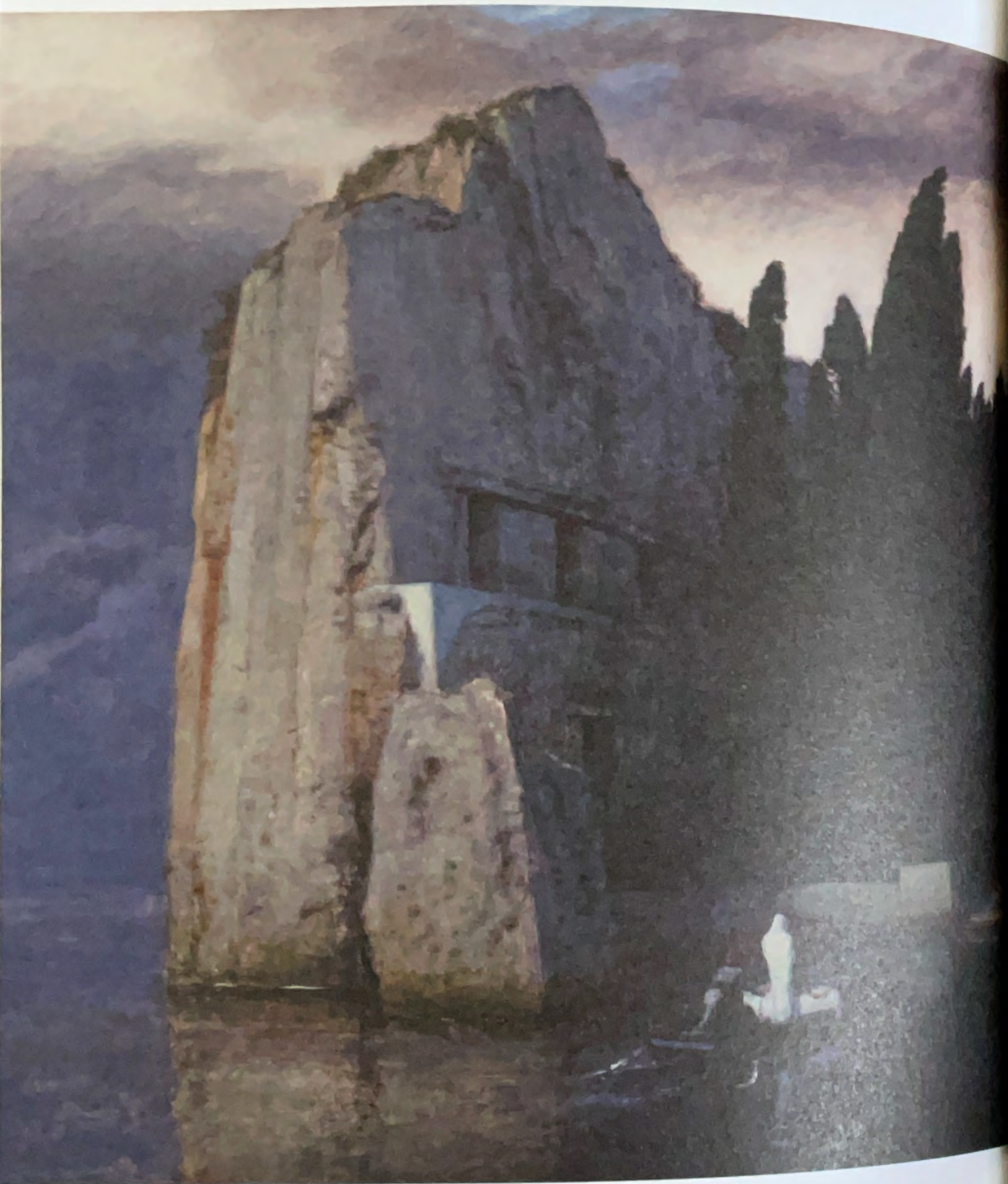
**Hannibal Lechter.** A cannibalizing serial killer, Lechter is a character in the novels of Thomas Harris — *Red Dragon*, *Silence of the Lambs*, and *Hannibal*. The novels were adapted into films in 2001 and 2003 and a NBC television show in 2013, both of which were partly shot in Florence. The films starring Anthony Hopkins as Hannibal were directed by Jonathan Demme in 1991 and Ridley Scott in 2001. In preparation for writing the novels Harris attended the trial of Pietro Pacciani, the Monstro di Scandicci and was a guest of Count Niccolò Capponi in his palazzo on the via dei Bardi. These sites were important for Hannibal:

- Via dei Bardi
- Palazzo Capponi
- Palazzo Vecchio
- Piazza della Signoria
- Church and cloister of Santa Croce
- Santa Maria Novella Pharmacy
- Ponte Vecchio
- Pietro Tacca's Porcellino Fountain
- Loggia del Mercato Nuovo
- Via dei Serragli
- Piazza Tasso
- Via Villani
- Piazza Bellosguardo

**Robert Langdon**, is a character in Dan Brown's novels *Angels & Demons* (2000), *the Da Vinci Code* (2003), *the Lost Symbol* (2009) and *Inferno* (2013). The latter topped all book sales in the US the year it was released. Langdon, a Harvard University Professor and expert in religious symbolism solves crimes with his assistant Sienna Brooks. In *Inferno*, Langdon is described as a symbolologist as well as an art historian and uses clues from Dante and Botticelli to help solve a crime of biological warfare. At one point a nemesis notes that there is an overabundance of exposed penises on statues outside the Uffizi. Walking into the Piazza della Signoria the character then observes that several of the sculptural groupings in the Loggia dei Lanzi depict violence wrought on women by men. Tom Hanks portrayed Langdon in film adaptations of *Angels & Demons*, *the Da Vinci Code* and *Inferno*, each directed by Ron Howard. Langdon visits:

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Boboli Gardens:       | • Grotta del Buontalenti                                  |
| Vasari Corridor       |   |
| Palazzo Vecchio:      | • Salone dei Cinquecento,                                 |
|                       | • Francesco I's "studiolo"                                |
|                       | • Hall of Maps  |
|                       | • Bianca Cappello's "secret room"                         |
|                       | • secret corridor built into the walls of Palazzo Vecchio |
| Via della Ninna       |   |
| Piazza della Signoria |   |
| House of Dante        |   |
| Badia Fiorentina      |   |
| Baptistery            |   |
| Duomo                 |   |











Suit of  
armour,  
made in  
Innsbruck  
by Konrad  
Treytz the  
Younger,  
1520, Museo  
Stibbert,  
Florence  
(Photo:  
the Getty)

- Giardino dei Tarocchi (Capalbio)
- Museo Ardegno Soffici (Poggio a Caiano)
- Museo Audiovisivo della Resistenza Massa Carrara e La Spezia (Fosdinovo)
- Museo Casa Francesco Datini (Prato)
- Museo della Cultura Contadina (Orbetello)
- Museo della Deportazione (Prato)
- Museo della Mezzadria senese (Buonconvento)
- Museo dell'Antica Grancia e dell'Olio (Rapolano Terme)
- Museo delle Miniere (Volterra)
- Museo della Paglia e dell'Intreccio (Signa)
- Museo del Paesaggio (Castelnuovo Berardenga)
- Museo del Tartufo (San Giovanni d'Asso)
- Museo del Tessuto (Prato)
- Museo de Marmo (Carrara)
- Museo Richard-Ginori della manifattura di Doccia (Sesto Fiorentino — currently closed)
- Museo Salvatore Ferragamo (Florence)
- Museo Stefano Bardini (Florence)
- Museo Stibbert (Florence)
- Sinagoga e Museo Ebraico (Siena)





**Emma Thompson and Kenneth Branagh in a scene from the 1993 film *Much Ado About Nothing***  
(Photo: Frame Enlargement)



- Romola* (Henry King, 1924), starring Lillian and Dorothy Gish.
- Ben Hur* (Fred Niblo, 1925), starring Ramon Novarro, Francis X. Bushman and May McAvoy.
- Der Kilometertresser* (Karl Imelsky, 1925), starring Ernst Ganauser.
- Paisàn* (Roberto Rossellini, 1948).
- Senza pietà* (Alberto Lattuada, 1948).
- Cuori sul mare* (Giorgio Bianchi, 1950).
- Margherita da Cortona* (Mario Bonnard, 1950), starring Maria Frau, Isa Pola and Galeazzo Benti.
- I Figli di Nessuno / Nobody's Children* (Raffaello Matarazzo, 1951).
- Rivalita* (a.k.a. *Medico condotto*) (Giuliano Biagetti, 1953).
- Romeo and Juliet* (Renato Castellani 1954).
- Guendalina* (Alberto Lattuada, 1957), starring Jacqueline Sassard, Raf Mattioli and Sylva Koscina.
- Le Notti Bianche* (Luchino Visconti, 1957).
- La Ragazza Del Palio / The Love Specialist* (Luigi Zampa, 1958), starring Diana Dors, Vittorio Gassman, Franca Valeri, and Bruce Cabot.
- Giovani mariti / Young Husbands* (Mauro Bolognini, 1958).
- Una Vita Difficile* (Dino Risi, 1961), starring Alberto Sordi, Lea Massari and Franco Fabrizi.
- Love on a Pillow* (Roger Vadim, 1962), starring Brigitte Bardot.
- Il sorpasso* (Dino Risi, 1962), starring Vittorio Gassman, Catherine Spaak and Jean-Louis Trintignant.
- Eight and a Half* (Federico Fellini, 1963).
- The Yellow Rolls-Royce* (Anthony Asquith, 1964), starring Rex Harrison, Ingrid Bergman, Shirley MacLaine, Omar Sharif, George C. Scott, Art Carney, Alain Delon and Jeanne Moreau.
- Vaghe stelle dell'Orsa / Sandra of a Thousand Delights* (Luchino Visconti, 1965).
- L'arcidiavolo* (Ettore Scola, 1966), starring Vittorio Gassman, Claudine Auger and Mickey Rooney.



*Romeo and Juliet* (Franco Zeffirelli, 1968).

*Fratello Sole, Sorella Luna* (Franco Zeffirelli, 1972).

*Il Domestico* (Luigi Filippo D'Amico, 1974), starring Lando Buzzanca.

*Amici Miei* (Mario Monicelli, 1975), starring Ugo Tognazzi, Gastone Moschin and Philippe Noiret.

*L'Anatra all'Arancia* (Luciano Salce, 1975), starring Monica Vitti, Ugo Tognazzi and Barbara Bouchet.

*Grazie... nonna* (Marino Girolami, 1975), starring Edwige Fenech and Valerio Fioravanti.

*Per le antiche scale / Down the Ancient Staircase* (Mauro Bolognini, 1975).

*Libera, amore mio!* (Mauro Bolognini, 1975), starring Claudia Cardinale.

*Quella età maliziosa / That Malicious Age* (Silvio Amadio, 1975).

*La dottoressa sotto il lenzuolo* (Gianni Martucci, 1976), starring Angelo Pellegrini, Orchidea De Santis and Gigi Ballista.

*Obsession* (Brian de Palma, 1976).

*Berlinguer ti Voglio Bene* (Giuseppe Bertolucci, 1977), starring Roberto Benigni, Alida Valli and Carlo Monni.

*Padre Padrone* (Paolo e Vittorio Taviani, 1977), starring Omero Antonutti, Saverio Marconi and Marcella Michelangeli.

*Dove vai in Vacanza* (Alberto Sordi, 1978), starring Ugo Tognazzi, Stefania Sandrelli and Pietro Brambilla.

*Il Prato* (Paolo and Vittorio Taviani, 1979), starring Michele Placido, Saverio Marconi and Isabella Rossellini.

*L'insegnante balla... con tutta la classe* (Giuliano Carnimeo, 1979).

*Amici miei atto II* (Mario Monicelli, 1982), starring Paolo Stoppa.

*Madonna che Silenzio c'è Stasera* (Maurizio Ponzi, 1982), starring Francesco Nuti, Edy Angelillo and Massimo Sarchielli.

*La Notte di San Lorenzo* (Paolo e Vittorio Taviani, 1982).

*The Night of the Shooting Stars* (Paolo Taviani and Vittorio Taviani, 1982).

*Nostalghia* (Andrey Tarkovsky, 1983) starring Oleg Yankovsky, Domiziana Giordano and Erland Josephson.

*Sapore di mare / Time for Loving* (Carlo Vanzina, 1983).

*Sapore di mare 2 — Un anno dopo* (Bruno Cortini, 1983).

*Room with a View* (James Ivory, 1985), starring Maggie Smith, Helena Bonham Carter, and Denholm Elliott.



*Speriamo che sia femmina* (Mario Monicelli, 1986), starring Liv Ullmann, Catherine Deneuve and Philippe Noiret.

*Good Morning Babilonia* (Paolo e Vittorio Taviani, 1987) starring Vincent Spano, Joaquim de Almeida and Greta Scacchi.

*Oci Ciornie* (Nikita Mikhalkov, 1987), starring Marcello Mastroianni, Silvana Mangano and Marthe Keller.

*Domani accadrà* (Daniele Luchetti, 1988).

*C'era un castello con 40 cani / There was a castle with forty dogs* (Duccio Tessari, 1990), starring Peter Ustinov.

*Where Angels Fear to Tread* (Charles Sturridge, 1991), starring, Helena Bonham Carter, Judy Davis and Rupert Graves.

*Al Lupo, al Lupo* (Carlo Verdone, 1992), starring Carlo Verdone, Sergio Rubini and Francesca Neri.

*Much Ado about Nothing* (Kenneth Branagh 1993), starring Kenneth Branagh, Emma Thompson and Keanu Reeves.

*Cari fottutissimi amici* (Mario Monicelli, 1994).

*Only You* (Norman Jewison, 1994), starring Marisa Tomei, Robert Downey, Jr., and Bonnie Hunt.

*Le Affinità Elettive* (Paolo e Vittorio Taviani, 1996), starring Isabelle Huppert and Fabrizio Bentivoglio.

*Albergo Roma* (Ugo Chiti, 1996), starring Alessandro Benvenuti, Claudio Bisio and Debora Caprioglio.

*Il Ciclone* (Leonardo Pieraccioni, 1996), starring Leonardo Pieraccioni, Sergio Forconi, Massimo Ceccherini and Barbara Enrichi.

*The English Patient* (Anthony Minghella, 1996), starring Ralph Fiennes, Juliette Binoche and Kristen Scott Thomas.

*Portrait of a Lady* (Jane Campion, 1996), starring Nicole Kidman.

*Stealing Beauty* (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1996), starring Liv Tyler, D.W. Moffett and Jeremy Irons.

*La Vita è Bella* (Roberto Benigni, 1997), starring Roberto Benigni, Nicoletta Braschi and Giorgio Cantarini.

*Ovosodo* (Paolo Vizi, 1997), starring Edoardo Gabbriellini, Malcolm Lunghi and Regina Orioli.

*Midsummer Night's Dream* (Michael Hoffman, 1998), starring Kevin Kline, Michelle Pfeiffer, Rupert Everett and Sophie Marceau.

*Il mio West* (Giovanni Veronesi, 1998), starring Leonardo Pieraccioni, Harvey Keitel and David Bowie.

*Viola bacia tutti* (Giovanni Veronesi, 1998).



*Tea with Mussolini* (Franco Zeffirelli, 1999), starring Maggie Smith, Judi Dench, Cher and Joan Plowright.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Michael Hoffman, 1999).

*Where Angels Fear to Tread* (Tom Sturridge, 1999).

*The Gladiator* (Ridley Scott, 2000), starring Russell Crowe.

*Gostanza da Libbiano* (Paolo Benvenuti, 2000), starring Lucia Poli, Valentino Davanzati and Renzo Cerrato.

*Up at the Villa* (Philip Haas, 2000), starring Kristin Scott Thomas, Sean Penn and Anne Bancroft.

*Hannibal* (Ridley Scott, 2001), starring Anthony Hopkins, Julianne Moore and Gary Oldman based the novel by Thomas Harris.

*Certified Copy* (Abbas Kiarostami, 2001).

*Pinocchio* (Roberto Benigni, 2002), starring Roberto Benigni, Nicoletta Braschi, and Carlo Giuffrè.

*Under the Tuscan Sun* (Audrey Wells, 2003), starring Diane Lane, Raoul Bova, and Sandra Oh.

*La meglio gioventù* (Marco Tullio Giordana, 2003), starring Luigi Lo Cascio and Alessio Boni, Jasmine Trinca.

*Piazza delle Cinque Lune* (Renzo Martinelli, 2003), starring Donald Sutherland, Giancarlo Giannini, and Stefania Rocca.

*My Life as a Stars and Stripes* (directed by and starring Massimo Ceccherini, 2003).

*L'Amore Ritrovato* (Carlo Mazzacurati, 2004), starring Stefano Accorsi, Maya Sansa and Marco Messeri.

*Ti amo in tutte le lingue del mondo* (Leonardo Pieraccioni, 2005), starring Leonardo Pieraccioni.

*Shadows in the Sun* (Brad Mirman, 2005), starring Harvey Keitel and Joshua Jackson.

*Casino Royale* (Martin Campbell, 2006), starring Daniel Craig.

*Io e Napoleone* (Paolo Virzì, 2006), starring Daniel Auteuil, Elio Germano and Monica Bellucci.

*L'Estate del mio Primo Bacio* (Carlo Virzì 2006), starring Laura Morante, Andrea Renzi and Neri Marcorè.

*Milano Palermo il Ritorno* (Claudio Fragrasso, 2007), starring Giancarlo Giannini, Raoul Bova and Enrico Lo Verso.

*Piano, solo* (Riccardo Milani, 2007), starring Kim Rossi Stuart, Jasmine Trinca and Paola Cortellesi.

*Sweet Sweet Marja* (Angelo Frezza, 2007), starring Maria Grazia Cucinotta, Corrado Calda and Adolfo Margiotta.



- L'Uomo Privato* (Emidio Greco, 2007), starring Tommaso Ragno, Myriam Catania and Giulio Pampiglione.
- Mar nero* (Federico Bondi, 2008), starring Ilaria Occhini, Dorotheea Petre and Corso Salani.
- Miracle at St. Anna* (Spike Lee, 2008), starring John Turturro, Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Kerry Washington.
- Puccini e la Fanciulla* (Paolo Benvenuti and Paola Baroni, 2008), starring Riccardo Moretti, Tania Squillario and Giovanna Daddi.
- Quantum of Solace* (Marc Forster, 2008), starring Daniel Craig.
- La Seconda Volta non si Scorda Mai* (Francesco Ranieri Martinotti, 2008), starring Alessandro Siani, Elisabetta Canalis and Enzo De Caro.
- Miracle at St. Anna* (Spike Lee, 2008).
- The Twilight Saga: The New Moon* (Chris Weitz, 2009), starring Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson and Taylor Lautner.
- Cenci in Cina* (Marco Limbert, 2009), starring Alessandro Paci, Francesco Ciampi and Man Lo.
- Io e Marilyn* (Leonardo Pieraccioni, 2009), starring Leonardo Pieraccioni, Suzie Kennedy and Barbara Tabita.
- L'uomo che verrà* (Giorgio Diritti, 2009), starring Greta Zuccheri Montanari, Claudio Casadio and Alba Rohrwacher.
- Certified Copy* (Abbas Kiarostami, 2010), starring Juliette Binoche, William Shimell and Jean-Claude Carrière.
- Letters to Juliet* (Gary Winick, 2010), starring Amanda Seyfried, Gael García Bernal and Vanessa Redgrave.
- La Prima Cosa Bella* (Paolo Virzì, 2010), starring Micaela Ramazzotti, Valerio Mastandrea, Claudia Pandolfi and Stefania Sandrelli.
- Cavalli* (Michele Rho, 2011), starring Vinicio Marchioni, Michele Alhaique and Giulia Michelini.
- C'è chi dice no* (Giambattista Avellino, 2011), starring Luca Argentero, Paola Cortellesi and Paolo Ruffini.
- Rajapattai* (Suseenthira, 2011), starring 'Chiyaan' Vikram, Deeksha Seth and K. Viswanath, filmed at Monteriggioni.
- L'ultimo terrestre* (Gian Alfonso Pacinotti, 2011), starring Gabriele Spinelli, Anna Bellato and Luca Marinelli.
- Giochi d'estate / Summer Games* (Rolando Colla, 2011).
- L'ultimo terrestre* (Gian Alfonso Pacinotti, 2011).
- La città ideale* (Luigi Lo Cascio, 2012) starring Aida Burruano, Luigi Maria Burruano and Barbara Enrichi.



*The Dark Knight Rises* (Christopher Nolan, 2012), starring Christian Bale, Morgan Freeman, Anne Hathaway, Marion Cotillard, Michael Caine, Tom Hardy, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Gary Oldman.

*Après mai / Something in the Air* (Olivier Assayas, 2012).

*Michelangelo — Il cuore e la pietra* (Giacomo Gatti, 2012).

*A Cigarette for the Road* (Alessio Giorgetti, 2012).

*Das Geheimnis der Villa Sabrini* (Marco Serafini, 2012).

*Das Geheimnis Mona Lisa* (Klaus Steindl, 2012).

*Gli Intrepidi* (Giovani Cioni, 2012), filmed in Florence.

*Football Gladiators* (Fabio Segatori, 2012).

*Fabrizio Misce Caselli* (Alessio Focardi & Claudio Focardi, 2012).

*Oggi voglio parlare* (Gianmarco D'Agostino, 2012).

*La Salla D'attesa* (Yolima Marini, 2012).

*Somm* (Jason Wise, 2012).

*Sarocharu* (Parasurm, 2012).

*Tony Bennett: Duets II* (2012).

*I Love You Like a Twist* (Lorenzo Lepori, 2012).

*Smettere di fumare fumando* (Gian Alfonso Pacinotti, 2012).

*Aglien* (Andrea Camerini, 2012).

*David Chipperfield: Form Matters* (Michael Blackwood, 2012).

*L'amore non crolla mai* (Roy Geraci, 2012).

*Sereno Anche Domani* (Giuseppe Golisano, 2012).

*I Follow the Cocumat's Leap and Head West* (Lorenzo Bechi, 2012).

*Pascoli a Barga* (Stefano Lodovichi, 2012).

*Greedy Fingers* (Antonio Fanteria, 2012).

*È viva la Torre di Pisa* (Daniele Segre, 2012).

*La valle del diavolo* (Sebastiano d'Ayala Valva, 2012).

*Luciana Castellina, comunista* (Daniele Segre, 2012).

*La migliore offerta / The Best Offer* (Giuseppe Tornatore, 2013).

*Epoch* (John Robson, 2013).

*Fiori di Baal* (Leonardi Pepi, 2013).

*Sta per piovere / It's About to Rain* (Haider Rashid, 2013).

*Il Seminarista* (Gabrielle Cecconi, 2013).



- Bathrooms* (Lorenzo Bechi, 2013).
- Mona Lisa — Leonardo's Earlier Version* (Rafael Feldman & Yan Feldman, 2013).
- Le Piccole Idee* (Giacomo Faenza, 2013).
- The Rain Temple* (Jesse Waugh, 2013).
- The Torrigiani Tower of Athanor* (Jesse Waugh, 2013).
- Europe Collection* (Alejandro Gabriel Cuberos, 2013).
- La grande bellezza* (Paolo Sorrentino, 2013).
- Viaggio sola* (Maria Sole Tognazzi, 2013).
- Apocalypse Z* (Luca Boni & Marco Ristori, 2013).
- Sole a catinelle* (Gennaro Nunziante, 2013).
- AmeriQua* (Marco Bellone & Giovanni Consonni, 2013).
- Anni felici / Those Happy Years* (Daniele Luccheti, 2013).
- Come il vento* (Marco S. Puccioni, 2013).
- Bella Vita* (Jason Baffa, 2013).
- Un fantastico via vai* (Leonardo Pieraccioni, 2013).
- Fedele alla linea* (Germano Maccioni, 2013).
- Sarebbe stato facile* (Graziano Salvadori, 2013).
- Un'insolita vendemmia* (Daniele Carnacina, 2013).
- La meritata follia* (Luca Bardi, 2013).
- Tellerrandland* (Stefan Freissner, 2013).
- Alta Via dei Parchi: Viaggio a piedi in Emilia Romagna* (Serena Degna Tommasini, 2013).
- Die Marmorberge von Italien* (Alessandro Cassigoli, 2013).
- Sapore di te* (Carlo Vanzina, 2014).
- Voice from the Stone* (Eric D. Howell, 2014).
- Mr. Peabody & Sherman* (Rob Minkoff, 2014).
- Il giovane favoloso / Leopardi (english title)* (Mario Martone, 2014).
- Terroir* (John Jopson, 2014).
- Uscio e Bottega* (Marco Daffra, 2014).
- M.D.M.A.* (Mac Gheri, 2014).
- Decollagé* (Vitor Deda, 2014).
- Vita Luxe* (Alexander Ackley & Frank Mirbach, 2014).
- Mi Chiamava Valerio* (Igor Biddau, 2014).
- The Drift* (Stefano Paggioni, 2014).



- La scuola più bella del mondo* (Luca Miniero, 2014).
- The Face of an Angel* (Michael Winterbottom, 2014).
- The Wonders* (Alice Rohrwacher, 2014).
- Morning Star* (Luca Boni & Marco Ristori, 2014).
- Toscaanse bruiloft* (Johan Nijenhuis, 2014).
- Fino a qui tutto bene* (Roan Johnson, 2014).
- Fratelli Unici / Unique Brothers* (Alesso Maria Federici, 2014).
- Scammerhead* (Dan Zukovic, 2014).
- I am the Keeper* (Sabine Boss, 2014).
- Natural Resistance* (Jonathan Nossiter, 2014).
- A Reason to Fight* (Alessandro Baccini, 2014).
- La creazione di significato / The Creation of Meaning* (Simone Rapisarda Casanova, 2014).
- Sarà un paese* (Nicola Compiotte, 2014).
- La Ballata del Sacco di Prato* (Mirco Rocchi, 2014).
- Secrets in the Bones: The Hunt for the Black Death Killer* (Liam O'Rinn, 2014).
- Il seme ed il mare* (Riccardo Casamonti, 2014).
- Frastuono* (Davide Maldi, 2014).
- Alberto Burri e Piero della Francesca: Le Due Rivoluzioni* (Luca Severi, 2015).
- Il racconto dei racconti* (Matteo Garrone, 2015).
- Zombie Massacre 2: Reich of the Dead* (Luca Boni & Marco Ristori, 2015).
- Maraviglioso Boccaccio* (Paolo Taviani & Vittorio Taviani, 2015).
- Secrets of the Mona Lisa* (Ian Leese, 2015).
- Storia di un Inganno* (Massimo di Stefano & Alessandro Ingrà, 2015), filmed in Florence.
- Frammenti Della Vita: Jefferson Rubin* (David Schler, 2015).
- Gli Immortali* (Michele Truglio, 2015).
- Le parole sono importanti* (Gabrielle Marco Cecchi, 2015).
- Il velo di Maya* (Elisabetta Rocchetti, 2015).
- Soul Journey* (Marco Della Fonte, 2015).
- SOMM: Into the Bottle* (Jason Wise, 2015).
- Palio* (Cosima Spender, 2015).
- Ming zhong zhu ding / Only You* (Hao Zhang, 2015).
- A Reason to Leave* (Norman Gregory, 2015).
- L'Oriana* (Marco Turco, 2015).



- Starting Over Again* (Ruggero Gabbai, 2015).  
*Basta Poco* (Andrea Muzzi & Riccardo Paoletti, 2015).  
*Waiting* (Cristian Piazza, 2015).  
*The Invisible Player* (Stefano Alpini, 2015).  
*Settembre* (Duccio Chiarini, 2015).  
*The Lion Dance* (Hil Steadman, 2015).  
*Korin* (Paolo Martini, 2016).  
*Condictum* (Roberto Valdés, 2016).  
*Luca and Lucia* (Natalie Rebecca Hechtman, 2016).  
*Maremmamara* (Lorenzo Renzi, 2016).  
*Massimo* (Giacomo Arrigoni, 2016).  
*Shadows and Light* (Giacomo Arigoni, 2016).  
*La mia Famiglia* (Giacomo Arigoni, 2016).  
*Inferno* (Ron Howard, 2016), starring Tom Hanks, Felicity Jones.  
*Florence, Yesterday* (Ursula Grisham, 2016).  
*L'insonne: Ouverture* (Alessandro Giordani, 2016).  
*Camminando sull'acqua* (Gianmarco D'Agostino, 2016).  
*Ti Proteggerò* (Daniele Di Stefano, 2016).  
*La Pazza Gioia / Like Crazy* (Paolo Virzì, 2016).  
*Ustica: The Missing Paper* (Renzo Martinelli, 2016).  
*Domino* (Edoardo Ulivelli, 2016).  
*Battle of Soho* (Aro Korol, 2017).  
*Titanium White* (Piotr Smigasewicz, 2017).  
*Vespucci* (Lorenzo Raveggi, 2017).  
*Niccolò Machiavelli il Principe della politica* (Lorenzo Raveggi, 2017).  
*You are Mythical* (Pedro Valiente, 2017).  
*House of Evil* (Luca Boni & Marco Ristori, 2017).  
*The Composer* (2017).  
*Inferno by Dante* (Boris Acosta, 2017).  
*The Secret of Botticelli* (Lorenzo Raveggi, 2017).  
*We Will Go with the Remains of the Day* (Lyia Terki, 2017).





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## SOME TUSCAN TOURS

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- Hannibal Lechter's Florence
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- Hot Air Balloon Flight Over Tuscany from Siena
- Inferno: History, Fiction and Mystery in Dan Brown's Florence
- Jeep Tours of Carrara Marble Quarries
- Jewish Tuscany Tour
- Maremma Guided Bike Tour
- Montecatini Wine Tour
- Pescaturismo in Viareggio
- Primavera Slow with the Nature Train
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- Sex, Drugs & the Renaissance
- Spa Experience in Tuscany
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Tuscany is a landscape whose cultural construction is complicated and multi-layered. It is this very complexity that this book seeks to untangle. By revealing hidden histories, we learn how food, landscape and architecture are intertwined, as well as the extent to which Italian design and contemporary consumption patterns form a legacy that draws upon the Romantic longings of a century before. In the process, this book reveals the extent to which Tuscany has been constructed by Anglos — and what has been distorted, idealized and even overlooked in the process.

“Under Lasansky’s meticulous eye, everything from rural life to local cuisine, Pinocchio to agriturismo, reveals a modern romanticized Tuscan past, no less recently constructed as it is historically suggestive”.

Niall Atkinson | University of Chicago

“Medina Lasansky has collected and preserved a remarkable array of visual evidence that transforms our understanding of how the Tuscan landscape came to be accepted as the most quintessentially Italian”.

Sarah Benson | St. Johns College, Annapolis

**D. Medina Lasansky** is a professor of architectural history at Cornell University where her research and teaching focus on the intersection of the built environment, politics and popular culture. She has published on topics ranging from the pink plastic lawn flamingo to graffiti. She is the author of *The Renaissance Perfected: Architecture, Spectacle and Tourism in Fascist Italy* (Penn State, 2004), co-editor of *Architecture and Tourism* (Berg, 2004), editor of *Archi.Pop* (Bloomsbury, 2014) and *The Renaissance. Revised, Expanded, Unexpurgated* (Periscope, 2014).